

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit amen

You bastard, how could you, I know what you did, pointing to the disciples (who were no doubt shuffling their feet and looking everywhere but at Jesus) we sent word to you, you were 3 km away and you let him die, she stops and pauses, Martha is exhausted, she has nursed Lazarus, prepped him for his burial and catered for all the mourners that have turned up. Is it any wonder she yelled at Jesus. But this pause is a significant part of the story as it gives breathing space because at this point, when asked by Jesus do you believe, she could have told him to go away, but instead she offers a series of I know statements; "I know that God will give, I know he will rise again on the last day."

It is in these statements we see one facet of belief, Martha shows us a solid concrete example of faith and even when Jesus pushes her further in verse 25&6 her answer remains one of firm assurance. Why is this encounter important well, in my opinion in order to resurrect Lazarus Jesus needed to anchor his divinity and humanity into something solid, Martha's faith was it and even though Mary was around her spiritual style of faith wouldn't have been enough and without that anchor I don't think he could have resurrected Lazarus.

Let's take a moment to look at Martha and Mary and their different approaches to their faith. Martha, practical, solid dependable prone to exasperated outbreaks of temper and these traits are mirrors of her faith, someone who has seen and believed; a lot like Thomas who we will meet again in a few week's time.

On the other hand Mary is more flighty and intellectual, she sees in Jesus what others can't seem to understand. She has a spiritual connection to Jesus that doesn't depend on witnessing miracles, she hears what lies beneath the parables and therefore believes.

Now we move in front of the tomb Martha and Mary on either side of Jesus we read that he is weeping, interpreted by the crowds as sorrow for his friend I think they were wrong. Faced with the closed tomb he glimpsed his future and the realisation that his own resurrection would be different. Lazarus would go on to live a long life, grow old, possibly have descendants, Jesus wouldn't have that he would be forever 33. The stone is rolled away and you can hear the frustration when he prays for the sake of the crowd here and so they may believe, one last miracle one last chance. He raises Lazarus and commands the crowd to unbind him and let him go free from death, to live again.

We leave Jesus in front of the tomb, alone, exhausted, emotionally fragile, contemplating his future this is the beginning of the end and it is at this moment we see him as utterly human, his divinity hidden until his arrest when he declares he is the Great I am.

We now move into the time before that arrest where everything about him and his activities are more human, than divine. The ego on show, fulfilled by the cheering crowds, the anger in the temple, being out there loud and visible, literally waving a large sign Its me here I am before the religious leaders, and most of all his hurt that he couldn't be the saviour Judas wanted, the one who would raise an army and free Israel and finally Gethsemane where he begged for the horror to be taken from him and the acceptance of his fate and his divinity restored.

Where does that leave us, there is nothing wrong with being either or or a mix, it is about acknowledging and upholding and valuing each others expressions of faith. This story

shows Jesus needing both one to anchor him and one to uphold him. The Martha's I would suggest are the backbones and hold up the church in ways that we often fail to grasp, the Mary's on the other hand we notice far more and possibly give them a higher profile than is needed; but make no mistake we need both to complete the story. A church based on one aspect of faith expression more often than not loses its way and credibility, embrace all faith expressions and we have a very good chance of being the church closest to the Jesus model.

But what about us here at St Peters? In the 5-6 years I have been here I have noticed that acceptance of me was immediate you welcomed me and made me feel right at home. Personal opinions are listened to and responded to with a gentle respect, I don't have to be deliberately controversial to demand to be listened to and my opinion treated fairly it just is. In the face of a direct aggressive challenge, I don't poke the bear quite so much anymore, (although sometimes I just can't resist as its fun.) This is the gift of St Peter's even though we are named after a foot in mouth, blunder straight in, speak before thinking man. We are not perfect, far from it, we can be thin skinned and our emotions do get away from us and grudges are held for an unnecessarily long time, however in my opinion I think we do really well at being Jesus people here in Paynesville. Always room for improvement though!

Amen.