

Relax!

Genesis 18^{1-10a}; Psalm 15; Colossians 1¹⁵⁻²⁸; Luke 10^{38-end}

Make known this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Col 1²⁷]

How relaxed a Christian are you?

If God were to call unannounced and told you about your future, could you laugh at him? That's what Sarah did (in the passage just beyond our OT reading) whilst it was Abraham that ran round getting the refreshments ready.

If Jesus dropped by, aware that he can create feasts from crumbs, would you worry about the cooking (or the dusting) or take time to ask all those questions you have had over the years (perhaps why so many were killed in Nice or why so many people think that politics matter, in the UK, Europe or even Turkey)? That was the dynamic between Mary and Martha (and no-one mentions what Lazarus was up to).

It is difficult to get the balance right:

- ✦ How can you have the **uncorrupt life** that the Psalmist speaks about (**do what is right; speak the truth; do not slander; do no evil to their friends; take no reproach against their neighbours; who stand by their oath even to their hurt**) and stay relaxed?
- ✦ How do you get your head around Paul's high theology in Colossians without getting stressed about it?
 - ✦ Accepting that Jesus is the **image of the invisible God** is fairly straightforward, as is the fact that **God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself** through Jesus. (We can leave the theologians to worry about the interpretation of the use of *prototokos* in that it doesn't make any practical difference to how we experience Jesus). No stress there!
 - ✦ The stress comes if we think that being **holy and blameless and irreproachable** before God would be very stressful if it depended on us. So, too, would **rejoicing in suffering**, or understanding **the**

mystery that has been hidden throughout all ages and generations.

But Paul tells us how we can relax - because it doesn't depend on us. He tells us that it depends on one thing - **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. He goes on to say that through the proclamation of Jesus - **warning and teaching** - it is possible to **present everyone mature in Christ!**

So is it possible to relax into our faith?

- ✦ Some are manic Christians that believe they always have to be doing something, always good things - the right things, to make sure that God keeps noticing them - a bit like Martha **distracted by her many tasks**. They are never relaxed!
- ✦ Some are serious students - a bit like Mary, perhaps - who spend so long trying to understand 'stuff' that they never get round to doing 'stuff'! They are never relaxed either!
- ✦ Some seem to be so laid back that neither thought nor action disturbs their equilibrium. They are perhaps too relaxed!

The balance is to relax into God and even to laugh about what God has planned for us, while getting on with achieving those plans.

Looking for faith - Relax into Christ.

Looking for consolation - relax into God's arms.

Looking for a future - relax into whatever God has in store for you.

This sermon was written before the devastating news that our brother, Thaddeus Ede, had been detained and is scheduled to be deported on this coming Wednesday. I have questioned whether or not it is frivolous to preach about 'relaxing into God' as we come to terms with this news. But God is God and we have no option but to relax into his love and grace. Our peace and peace of mind comes through the cross of Christ and our maturity in this faith is built through allowing God to help us deal with whatever comes our way, good or bad.