

**Mark 1:27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."**

Notice how people notice. (Yep, meant to say it just that way.) Jesus comes to the synagogue where everyone has expectations on what will happen, the way to understand God, and the manner in which things are taught. That is simply NOT Jesus. He has a way that baffles, engages, amazes, and confounds the conventional. That is (or should be) the Church.

Today, I met with the pastors from Trinity United Methodist and St. John's United Church of Christ. Our purpose was to vision August's Denver Day Service. It seems far in advance, but our purpose is to invite the community to something that engages and amazes, though for some it will baffle. We are looking to partner with the Cocalico Education Foundation for that Service. Why? The Service has always been about community. It is about our children. It is about teaching in the school and within our community what it means for churches to care for others before the very congregation who is 'the Church.' It asks nothing. We give everything for the sake of children who may never know who is helping them. That confounds what the world teaches.

In our meeting, we also started a discussion on a joint Good Friday event. It's different. It is off the page, then again it is perfectly in keeping with Good Friday: a "Death Café." Sort of grim, but in reality, Good Friday is all about engaging death in its most horrible form. Pastor Brad Haws made me smile when he said the Church should have a rule *that no one is allowed Easter unless they have been to Good Friday*. He means that people can have NO perspective of the resurrection without the cross. In truth, no one escapes "our Good Friday" since the manner of our death is only a factor to the truth we will die. While it may scare some people; undoubtedly, we all have our ideas on death. We have fears. We have "wishes" on how to handle our bodies and celebrate our lives. We all have property that reflects a lifetime of "who we are." (Our heirs may fight over that property.) How do we understand death? Well, our "Good Friday Café" will be an invitation to discuss our attitudes. It considers things we may have given little consideration. I give thanks to Dorothy Hoyer and Luther Acres who gave me a chance to participate at their "Death Café" event. It engaged and confounded me, but also amazed me how much there was to discuss. I hope you come. Necessity will require we limit how many people who may attend the "Café."

Ash Wednesday is earlier and so is Easter. Lisa Gaskill and I met on doing an Easter Egg Hunt, maybe at a time where people will say "why then?" For children where Easter is about the Cadbury bunny, is it possible the Church can remind that the "life" is not our passion for chocolate, but a life defined by Easter.

So back to Mark's gospel. Jesus is just at the start of his ministry. He has so MUCH MORE that will yet create a wonder that many will refuse. Others will grope to comprehend God's chosen means of teaching and touching humanity. Saying that, I hope more of you will come to Bible and Breakfast and our Sunday Adult Study. The examples above, are the invitation to be amazed regularly about our Lord.

With blessing...*Pastor Joe*