



***Knowledge isn't a commodity to be bought or sold
It's not a currency to exchange or acquire
Nor is it a weapon to be used to hurt and spite others
Knowledge is a right for all those who seek it***

Sermon: "Wise-mindedness" - 7-8-18 - Mark 6:1-13

Grace and Peace on this Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – Pause and Reflect...

My home congregation of Christ Lutheran Church in Glencoe, MN was very generous to me during my years at Seminary. Each year they would pay half of the cost of tuition, which was very helpful to this “Son of the Congregation” and struggling student. Of course this was only a portion of the costs of seminary which still included living expenses, books and other sundries/essentials. Because of their generous nature my home parish invited me to preach at least two times a year, usually the Sundays after Christmas and Easter when the pastor would be on vacation.

I wholeheartedly agreed to do this, I always enjoyed being involved in the worship life of this congregation, it gave me good opportunity to practice “Sermonizing” without a professor there to critique what I was saying. I also felt somewhat obligated because of the financial support they gave me toward my tuition. I was never told of this expectation but heard from other seminarians who also received “grants” such as these that there was an expectation to see “where their money was going.” One classmate told me that his home parish became upset with him when he couldn’t accommodate the Sunday they wanted him to preach because they “wanted to make sure he was making good use of their money.” I was amazed, and made sure I accommodated my home parish whenever possible.

In Mark's Gospel today Jesus is returning to his hometown and is greeted with different expectations. He is found to be teaching in the synagogue and surprises those who hear him with his eloquence, grace and wisdom. It was so impressive and "astounding" as we hear in verse 2 that people said, *"Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!* It was so different in our text than my home parish and the parish of my seminary friend who wanted and somewhat expected to hear "Godly" things come out of our mouths.

My home parish had seen me grow up, especially my high school year because a number of my high school teachers went to this church. It would have been easy for them to talk about me in the same way that the crowd and religious leaders talked about Jesus; *"I remember when Brian had difficulty diagraming sentences in English"* or *"I remember when he spent more time in his extra-curricular activities than his studies,"* even though I did well in my school work. They certainly could have and maybe did talk about me, but I never heard anything but how "wonderful" I was and they asked questions about how seminary was going, quite the opposite than Jesus experienced.

Those who were listening to Jesus were excited about what he had to say, they became disheartened at the same time, and "took offense at him." As I said my digest article; "Jesus can't win for losing in this situation" which is an interesting statement. The people like what he was saying but at the same time rejected it because of who they "thought" he was and where he came from. He was one of them, the son of a carpenter, whose mother was Mary who was here along with his brothers and sisters. *"How could someone so NORMAL speak with such wisdom – who does he think he is?"* They seem to be saying. It seems out of the realm of their understanding - that Jesus could be one of them, what happened to him to make him different?

The people rejected what Jesus was saying and they also rejected him and his ministry. Their only expectation for him was to come back home and be a carpenter like his dad – Joseph. We know that's not the case, Mary must have too but we don't hear anything from her in this text. They didn't expect him to be wise or full of wisdom at his age.

Wisdom comes with time and experience, heartache and pain it seems, could Jesus have experienced that yet?

I remember the first time I put on a clerical shirt and collar, something changed and yet it didn't. I looked different, but it kind of felt like a costume. I didn't really feel different – well until I wore my clerics out in public then it was different – the response from people was different, from my family that was different. The place where I noticed the biggest difference was when I would go to the hospitals for visits; people respected the collar I was wearing without even knowing me. My first parish was about an hour from Mayo Clinic/Hospital in Rochester, MN and the first time I went to visit someone I got horribly lost in their maze of hallways in that large complex. I remember ending up in an area marked for official personnel only and the only way out was walking right through it – I did that and no one questioned me or even asked if I needed help, they just assumed I knew where I was going.

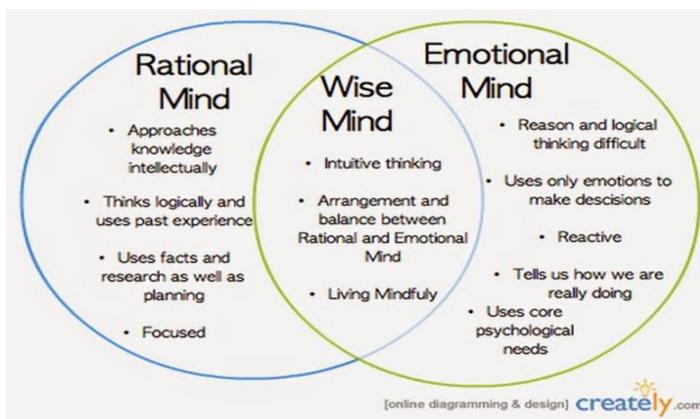
For Jesus it is the absolute opposite in our text this morning. He is the small town “boy” who goes out and returns as a “wise sage.” Even though people are impressed by his words they question his authority; *“How can he be so wise, isn't he just one of us?”* Jesus continues on with his mission and commissions the disciples to go out with essentially nothing, but dedication to the service of God in all that they do. I don't know about you but I would need an extra tunic and some cash or at least a credit card in my belt before venturing out to parts unknown before counting on the kindness of strangers. Then if they aren't open to the message which is being shared just “shake it off” like it is some sort of pop song sung by Taylor Swift – if you aren't sure who she is ask someone under 25. She has a popular song “Shake it off.” It is hard to shake off the negative comments of others and go onto the next, but that is what Jesus is talking about in this text, no one likes to be rejected.

Rejection certainly is central theme in this text. Jesus is rejected by his home town; Jesus commissions the 12 and tells them if they are rejected to go onto the next house. We are not people that easily shake off the dust and move on it seems, most often our egos get in the way and we can't tolerate the rejection by others. Jesus seems to be saying that

rejection is common and expect it. Not everyone is going to receive the message of the gospel in the same way or with open arms. Often one thinks “why share it at all,” if people won’t be receptive or the doing the sharing doesn’t feel wise enough.

Once I put on the clerical collar it was expected that I was wise, people asked me questions that I was supposed to have answers – about God – about the world – about everything! People expected something out of me, because wearing the collar represented Christ to others and also myself. I didn’t automatically become a wise sage but I did put on the wisdom of all who went before me. We do that too when we come to worship, when we pray, make the sign of the cross, share the gospel of grace with someone – we put on the wisdom of those who have gone before us and use something I and some others call the “Wise Mind” to nurture the experience of Wisdom in our lives.

Wise-Mindedness or putting on one’s Wise Mind (Linehan 1993) is the part of our mind where Emotion (feelings) and Reasonable (rational thoughts) intersect or merge. Wise Mind helps us make sense of our thoughts and feelings, and come up with a balanced and wise response, so that the needs of both Reasonable Mind (what I should do) and Emotion Mind (what I want to do) are met. Usually quietly calm, it’s that wise inner part of us that just ‘knows’ what is true or valid.



Rational Mind are evidence based understandings. What would be more reasonable or logical? What are my thoughts about the situation? What kind of advice would I give to a friend, or a loved one? **Emotional Mind** are based on our opinions and perceptions of various events. Often one let's their

emotions predict future outcome. **Wise Mind** Take a breath and consider the bigger picture. (© Carol Vivyan 2010, permission to use for therapy purposes)

We may not have the wisdom of Jesus, even if it is expected of us. You may not have clerical collar to put on to change your life or the way you view your life of faith and service as disciples but we all can nurture the wisdom of life which surrounds us and is in us. We do that when we seek the wise mind the overlap of the Emotional Mind and the Reasonable Mind as we live as disciples. Amen.

Brian Oltman, Pastor - Resurrection Lutheran Church - Coronado, CA - www.rl.church