

COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

Taking Risks

I get a lot of mixed messages when it comes to risk.

When I worked briefly in insurance, I was encouraged to pursue clients with the least amount of risk exposure.

I've heard professional and personal coaches suggest some amount of risk is necessary to grow as a person and be a better boss or employee.

Society generally frowns upon risky behavior among teens, and yet children's development authors note teen brains and bodies are hardwired to take risks, teaching them how to handle life better as adults.



And these days, every church growth strategist or congregational behavior analyst I've read or I listened to say congregations must face risk if they are to remain relevant.

See what I mean about mixed messages? It comes then as something of a comfort to know we as followers of Christ are not the first ones to face risky things. For the next six Sundays, we as congregations can see how Jesus took a lot of risks on his way towards his Passion. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward.

Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges.

In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience. We will be talking about these questions during our Bible Study following worship each Sunday and covering the larger question of WHY Jesus was willing to take these risks during preaching in Sunday's worship.

Let me invite you and those you value to take a not-so-risky step of joining us for worship throughout Lent these 40 days and nights. I cannot promise that God won't offer some amount of new risks for us to face, but I can promise God will be with us in all things together.

Peace of Christ to each of you and wishing you a most Holy Lent.

Pastor Brian