

I am not sure how it started or when and where, but somewhere along the way I had developed a fear of asking questions. This was especially true in school and something that was exasperated while in seminary. Early on in seminary I perceived what I deemed a disadvantage. Many of my classmates were younger and coming straight out of college. But that was not the key disadvantage on which I dwelt. Many of my classmates were coming straight out of private Christian universities (i.e. St Olaf, Augustana, Gustavus). Many had taken religion classes, and some even had religion majors or minors. They had studied many of the theologians that we were studying and reading in seminary. And many of those theologians were ones of which I had never heard or read. Coming out of a state university with an accounting degree, seminary was not even close to my future plans. I felt unprepared and intimidated. So, when questions arose with me, I was afraid to raise my hand in class out of fear of looking ignorant or stupid and so, I kept quiet. Sometimes I worked up the courage to ask my professor after class, but always in their office, away from prying eyes or ears. But even then, I feared what my professor thought of me. And so, through unasked questions, I was left to search for the answers myself or just let it go.

In the Gospel text for Sunday, Sept 19 from Mark 9:30-32, Jesus is teaching the disciples privately saying, "***The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.***" ***But they*** (the disciples) ***did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him*** (Jesus)." Maybe this fear stemmed from Jesus' rebuke of Peter when Peter challenged Jesus about this earlier. Whatever the case, they kept the matter to themselves, but later would understand. But how many people today, "keep the matter to themselves" and never come to understand. Often it is not because of a fear of asking questions (it could be) but rather not knowing the right questions or even realizing that they have questions. Too often, we just assume that fellow worshippers or others are Christians. They never ask questions, and we never press the issue, but maybe we should.

Have you ever asked someone, "*How's your relationship with Jesus doing?*" This may make you or that other person uncomfortable, but it could just be the question they or you need to hear. They could be looking for that right person who will not think less of them if their relationship with Jesus is lacking. You should never assume faith. In all places and in all situations, give them Jesus. As

a follower of Jesus, I would love to hear that question from a brother or sister; someone who cares for my eternal wellbeing. Never assume faith and always assume there are unasked questions lurking out there that need answers. Become a safe place for someone to get the answers they need. To God be the glory and Amen.