

**WAS JESUS MAD?**  
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We have been enjoying the products of MAD Camp  
Thank you Becky and Monica and all the staff who helped!

It got me to thinking about all the times Jesus was called MAD in the Bible  
It had nothing to do with Music Art and Drama – this name calling of Jesus

The word MAD had another meaning when they called Jesus that word

MAD meant Jesus was acting in a way that seemed to be crazy...out of his  
mind...

You are MAD! The Pharisees would say over and over

**Mark 3:20-22** *Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that  
they could not even eat.*

***21*** **But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for  
they said, “He is MAD.”**

He is MAD

I can actually see why the people would say this  
Jesus did not do things the way people thought he should  
Jesus did not follow the law

He did not do the normal & expected  
He did things that made people scratch their heads  
He did things that made people confused  
He did things that made no sense to folks...he broke set all the time in different  
ways

Look at this statement... JOHN 11: 5-6 **Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister  
and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup>So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two  
more days in the place where He was.**

*When Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill...he stayed two days longer in the  
place where he was*

Is Jesus out of his mind? Is he MAD?

If you could heal the sick, why would you stay away longer when you hear that your friend is ill? Especially when the sisters, Mary and Martha, had specifically asked him to come and heal Lazarus...

Or take this incident...Jesus has been in the hills praying...the crowd he had ministered to the night before is searching for him. They can't find him. The disciples go out looking for Jesus and they find him praying...and they say (my paraphrase)

**Mark 1:36-38 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

**36 And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37 When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 38 He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do."**

*"Master," everyone is looking for you!  
He said, "Let us not go to those people. Let's go to other villages"*

Would you say Jesus is MAD here perhaps? Or maybe just not a moral compassionate person?

Why wouldn't you help those who needed you? Why would you leave and go somewhere else?

None of this makes any sense

We might even conclude that Jesus was acting in an unchristian way!

He wasn't helping the needy

He was turning his back on those who called out to him

We don't often think of Jesus in this way!!

Yet it is very important for us to understand something, when we think about our own lives in the context of how Jesus lived his life

**There is a difference between being moral and being spiritual**

I think sometimes in churches we think we need to be moral people only

And we simply stop there

There's nothing wrong with being moral – and by moral I mean socially responsible, compassionate and humanitarian

Doing what we might call "the right thing"

But the church – the people of God – are called way beyond that...

If we are just moral people

We do whatever needs to be done for the good of all

We respond constantly to human needs and concerns that arise in the moment

We are on alert for how to do the next good thing

In fact it is very popular to be morally responsible today  
Companies like Starbuck are always touting how they are helping the environment and giving away a percentage of revenue to less fortunate areas of the world.

We think, "Oh that's a good company! I will support them!"

Because it is popular nowadays to be morally responsible, and compassionate, and have a humanitarian heart,

Nothing wrong with our attempts to be good people  
Note too that this message is a great marketing tool.  
Everyone under the sun has some humanitarian cause, some way to help the less fortunate, the environment etc.

Just as a side note...

MacDonalds gives less than 1% of its revenue to Ronald MacDonal House....a place for families to stay when their kids are sick  
So just don't let these places fool you.

So if everyone is helping everyone out nowadays...this sort of begs the question...doesn't it...as to why we need the church

If everyone is doing nice things for everyone, if everyone is giving away food and backpacks, and providing housing, and we have Goodwill Stores, and community services, why do we need the church? What purpose does it serve?

I will tell you. Are you listening?

Jesus was not simply moral. He was not simply just a humanitarian.  
Jesus was first and foremost spiritual. He did not answer first to people and their needs.

Jesus answered to God first.

And sometimes, when you do that, people might say, you are MAD.  
Even if you didn't go to MAD camp...

Please hear me again. The church is not simply a moral place...a place that does good stuff for people  
Its not just another Goodwill

The church as God intended it is a spiritual place - and by that I mean that as the Body of Christ we have a higher calling than simply just doing the next good thing as w,e or the culture might define it

That can lead to burnout...there is much need everywhere!  
We will exhaust ourselves trying to be moral...as we are pulled in a thousand different directions.

Our calling as the church, is the highest of callings – it is to listen to the voice of God and follow him first  
Beyond the clamor of the crowds and the culture  
Beyond what might seem right and proper and humanitarian

I am not saying that God is not a humanitarian...the God doesn't care about people.

The whole point of the Christian gospel is that God cares intimately and passionately for people.

However, God's ways of touching people's lives are sometimes very different than our ways.

What we might think is the next good thing to do

That's why we can't just be moral...we have to be spiritual

We have to do what God is calling us to do first...

We need to listen to him...

Not just what might seem to be the next good thing...in our own eyes

We need stay attuned to the Lord...

When Jesus didn't go to Lazarus when he was sick, and let him die...

Well...that looked like he didn't care

But he cared more than you can imagine

Jesus wanted to do something so much bigger than simply healing Lazarus (the moral thing in everyone's eyes)

He wanted to raise him from the dead

As a foreshadowing to the people of his own resurrection

As a statement that death is not the end

As a declaration of God's triumph over death – the enemy of us all

It looked like it was anti-humanitarian

It looked like it was not a moral compassionate decision

When in reality, it was exactly that

But done very differently than just rushing to the scene of the need in the moment

Jesus was spiritual FIRST. He was listening to God...and responding to that

Or take the situation with the crowds

Jesus had been praying in the hills

God was calling Jesus to spread the gospel to as many people as possible

God was not calling Jesus back to the crowd that was searching for him – that he had already been with the day before  
Jesus was being called forward, away from that crowd, to others who also needed the gospel, and Jesus knew it...

Jesus was spiritual FIRST. He was listening to God...and responding to that  
We must not, as the people of God, the church, just rush around and do the next good thing in our own eyes

**Our job, as the church is to listen to the Holy Spirit  
Discerning God's will first  
And then act upon that...even if it seems MAD**

I know that my leaving WVPC – next Sunday is my last Sunday – may seem a bit weird

But I have never been so sure of anything in my life  
My season here is over, and I am convinced WVPC has a bright future ahead  
I just want you to know that if I hadn't been in prayer about this, I would stay here  
Its comfortable. Its secure. I know all of you. You are great.  
However, the calling is clear to me and I must follow.

For your own lives, and for the life of this church  
I beg of you to seek God's will first, listen to the Holy Spirit's leading before  
burning yourself out on good deeds

Because when God does it, his way, through you... that may seem MAD/crazy  
in the moment...

Gods power is unleashed...

And what is impossible on a good works human effort level, happens because  
the power of the Holy Spirit is then unleashed to do only what an all powerful  
God can do in a world of darkness...

As we approach this table today...**it was a MAD decision to go to the cross**  
Jesus does what doesn't make any sense...he willingly submits to the cross to  
be executed

But Jesus was spiritual first  
Not simply moral.

If he had just been moral he would have probably escaped, healed a bunch more  
people. Taught a bunch more lessons. Maybe we would have had a thicker  
New Testament, because he would have stayed alive longer and done a bunch  
more stuff for everyone. Makes sense from a moral perspective.

But Jesus was spiritual first, and knew that God was calling him to the cross –  
even though he prayed in agony 'no...please...not the cross'

Its sometimes much harder to be spiritual than simply to be moral. Because the  
world says, "You are MAD"...and we have to follow God anyway.

The truth is God was doing so much more in the cross than anyone had any idea. Because of the cross millions have come to God, experienced forgiveness, and found peace and purpose and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Friends as we take communion today, lets endeavor to listen first to the Lord. Let's take communion as spiritual people, ready to be spiritual children, following God's calling first.

Even if it seems MAD...Let us pray...