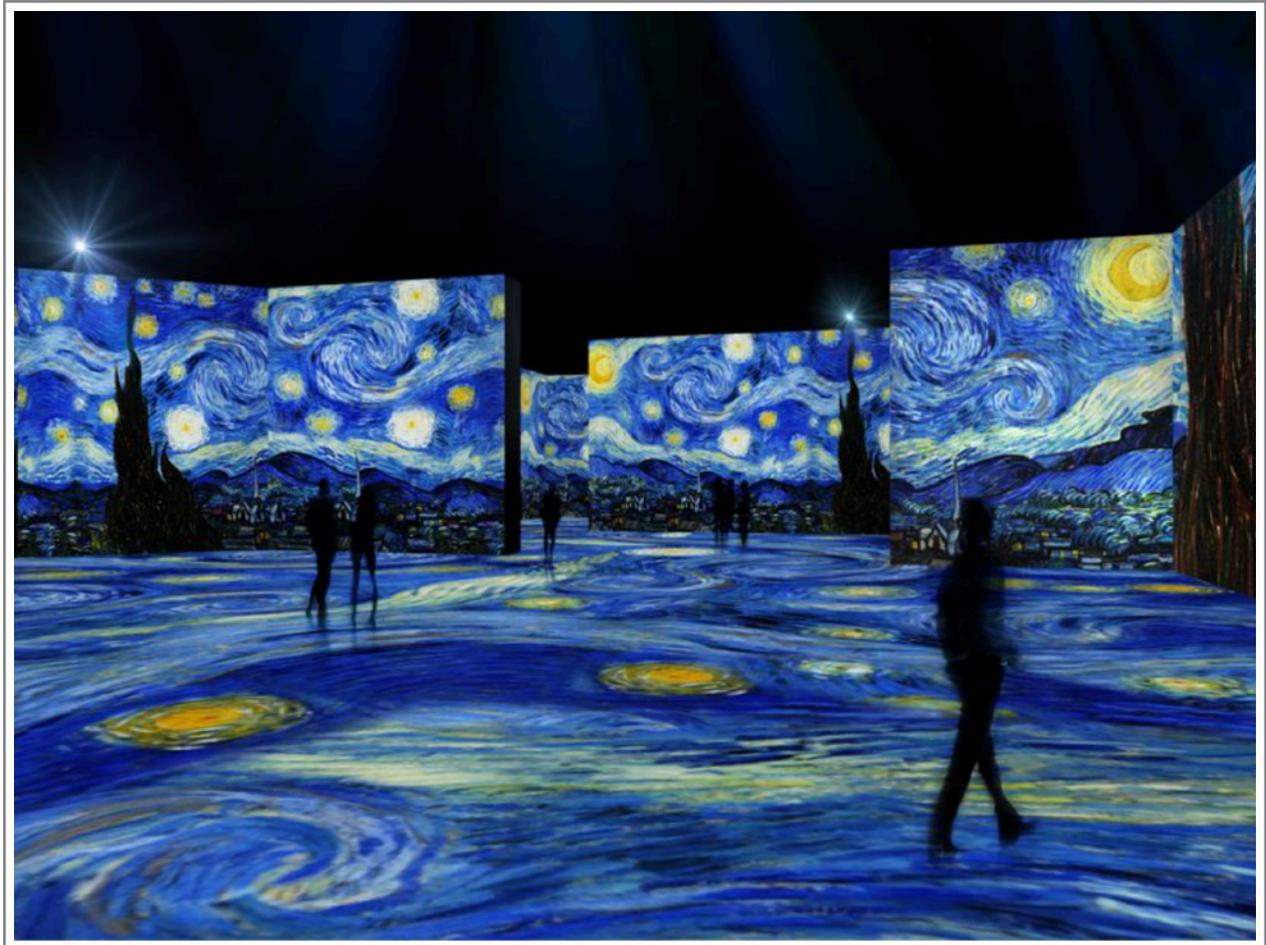


“AMAZING”

Mark 1:23-28

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The Rev. A. David Paul

*Calvin Presbyterian Church
Zelienople, Pennsylvania
www.calvinchurchzelie.org*

From vanGogh to molecules to the entire universe to you and I gazing upon a **“Starry Night.”** Isn’t God AMAZING? Our lives are lived out with this AMAZING God on this AMAZING planet God created. I find it interesting that by age 5, before the first day of school, we knew that life on this earth has its **“ups”** and **“downs.”** And when we get older its very different ups and downs that concern us. I read recently that one way to find out when you’re old is to fall down in front of a group of people. If they laugh, you’re young, If they rush to your side asking if you’re ok, you’re old. 😂

Well, I’m pretty sure that’s less of a question for this 85-year-old woman. I love her story, it’s a real chuckler. Inspired by the late 41st President, George H. W. Bush’s celebration of birthdays, she decided to take up sky diving. After she attended instruction classes, the day came for her first jump. Strapping on a parachute, she stood awaiting her turn to leap out of the plane. But when she looked at the ground below, she lost her nerve. Finally, she reached into her pocket, pulled out a small transmitter and radioed her instructor on the ground, **“Help! I’ve Gotten Up, and I can’t Fall Down!”** 😂¹

In today’s lectionary passage of the man with an unclean spirit we have a man who has fallen down and can’t get up. To fully understand we cannot miss out on this small detail, we cannot miss out on this small detail, that is, we find this man in the Temple, in the equivalent of the church. That means he’s you, he’s me. He’s not like all the **“others”** who in that day and age were literally kept outside the city walls, let alone outside the Temple. He’s right there, in their church, he’s one of them, he’s one of us. Life’s gotten the best of him, he’s been knocked down and he can’t get up. That is, until he is AMAZED by Jesus.

Dr. Diane Komp is a pediatric oncologist; she specializes in treating children who are suffering from cancer. Through her work with suffering children, she has moved from being an agnostic to being a Christian. One of her favorite quotes comes from a former patient: **“For the Christian, the Big C is not cancer; the Big C is Christ.”**² Jesus is the Big C. That’s what healed this man. That’s what was so **AMAZING** that it transformed Dr. Komp. That’s what was so **AMAZING** to everyone in that synagogue that it spread the Good news throughout Galilee.

A man was sleeping one night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light, and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do. The Lord explained that the man was to push against this large rock in front of his cabin with all his might. So, this the man did, day... after...day... For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down.

The large rock hadn’t moved and the man thought to himself, **“Why am I killing myself over this? Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; and that will be good enough.”** So that’s what the weary man did. But he decided to make it a matter of Prayer and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

“Lord,” he said, **“I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?”**

The Lord responded compassionately, **“My friend, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so?”**



"Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back burly and brown; your hands are callused from constant pressure, your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have.

"True, you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to PUSH. That you have done. Now, my friend, I will move the rock."

Friends, by all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is our AMAZING God who made them and it is still our AMAZING God who moves them. Just...Keep...Pushing....

Amen?!

¹ Sweet, Leonard. *When you drop the ball, what next?* [Leonard Sweet Sermons](#)

² Diane M. Komp, M.D. *A Window to Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), p. 18.

