

The Truth isn't enough?

Mark 8:11-13

Announcements:

1. Sept 6th we are meeting in the Sanctuary at our regular times
2. Sept 24th AWANA's starts
 1. First night—hamburgers and hot dogs, congregation come
 2. Every couple months family night, congregation come
 3. Be praying as this will be interesting year in light of COVID
3. Meet with school, open the doors to single parents, working parents, and prayer please!
4. Saturday men's prayer
5. Sunday Women's Coffee Talk at 3pm
6. Prayer for Associate Pastor search

A truck driver was taking his load to a new destination. As he drove, he was intently watching the signs leading to his exit. In his effort to find the right exit, he missed the signs warning him of a low overpass ahead. To his astonishment, his truck became stuck under the overpass. He could not go forward and he could not back up. Traffic began to back up and tempers began to flare. The police were called, wreckers were summoned and an effort began to free the stuck truck.

They tried tow trucks, wenches, grease, pulleys, wedges and anything else anyone suggested. Nothing worked. The hours passed and the truck remained just as stuck as ever.

By this time a considerable crowd had gathered to watch the workers in their attempts to free the truck. In that crowd was a little boy who was riding his bicycle over the overpass. He had stopped to watch the show, and after a few minutes, he called out to one of the policemen below. He said, "Hey officer, I know how to get that truck out from under that bridge."

The policeman looked up, but ignored the little boy.

The boy, wanting to help, cried out louder, "Hey officer, I know how to get that truck out from under that bridge."

With a hint of irritation in his voice, the police officer said, "Okay young man, tell me how."

Without a pause, the little boy said, "Let some of the air out of the tires." That's what they did and the truck was able to pull free.

I don't know if that tale is true or not, either way the story does teach a couple of important truths. First, it's easy to overlook the obvious, even when it is staring you right in the face. Second, wise people learn to pay attention to all the signs.

Signs are important in this physical world. I have missed a few turns because I missed a road sign. I have been speeding because I missed a sign that told me to slow down. Signs help you to know where you are and what you are supposed to be doing. Signs serve a valuable purpose in our lives.

Just as there are signs in the physical realm, there are also signs in the spiritual arena. Those signs are even more important than the signs in the physical world. You can miss a sign or two here and things will probably turn out fine. But, if you miss too many spiritual signs, you might end up in Hell. At the very least, you will end up in deep trouble with the Lord.

This passage tells us about a group of people who missed all the signs and got themselves into big trouble with the Lord Jesus. Let's watch what happens when you miss the spiritual signs the Lord has prepared for you. I want you to see the truths in this passage as I preach on the thought Don't Miss The Signs. This is a warning that many should take to heart.

Read Mark 8:11-13

Verse 11

-Pharisees

- lovers of money, power, control, were supposed to be the spiritual guru's, believed in the Torah (whole O.T.), but also put weight of the oral traditions on the same level
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- Matthew 16:1 adds that Sadducees came too
 - Sadducees and Pharisees were at odds with each other
 - Pharisees were amongst the people, the Sadducees were in the temple
 - Sadducees extorted money from the people
 - Sadducees were more conservative in nature with scripture and took it literal, Pharisees gave equal authority to the oral tradition
 - Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, Pharisees did
 - Sadducees did not believe in a spiritual realm with angels and demons, Pharisees did
 - Sadducees were aristocratic, Pharisees were more common people

- Sadducees were political in nature, Pharisees were concerned more with the spiritual
- Common enemies of Jesus
- Came and argued
 - the language reveals to us they came to fight
 - Mark 3:6 “Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”
 - the language reveals they kept arguing; badgering Him
 - Just as when we come to someone to argue, we have intent
 - intent to win
 - intent to show ourselves superior and dominate and right, and to show the other wrong and to put them down
- They wanted a sign from heaven
 - This is different than the miracles they had seen
 - There was a Jewish wife’s tale that said earthly signs were demonic, but heavenly signs were from God
 - Earlier on, when Jesus healed a man, they claimed He did it by the power of Satan
 - This sign wasn’t to reveal Jesus as Messiah, they wanted to show Jesus as anything but that
 - Why?
 - He wasn’t the Messiah they were looking for. He didn’t come in a political, military nature. He said His Kingdom is spiritual, and they were looking for the physical
 - He came to set up a covenant that was for the Jew, but also the Gentile
 - They wanted a sign *from heaven*
 - *something big and showy*
 - Fire called down from heaven (Elijah)
 - Parting of the Red Sea (Moses)
 - The standing still of the sun for 24 hours (Joshua)
 - Seeking a sign isn’t always bad
 - Sometimes it builds faith (Moses and Gideon)
 - Sometimes it brings people to a point of believing
 - This is key though: their hearts were softened towards God, not angry or hateful towards God
 - But to continue seeking a sign is not good. There is a time to begin to put faith into action (which is trust). The Lord’s anger burned against Moses because Moses still would not go, instead he asked to send someone in his place

- Some seek signs when signs have already been given
 - This isn't the first time the Pharisees come to Jesus seeking a sign (Matthew 12)
 - He already spoke with authority, cast out demons, healed a lame man, gave sight to the blind, forgave sins, healed countless people, and more.
 - Jesus response was not encouraging...He called them a 'wicked and adulterous generation' (Matthew 12:38-39)
 - By the way, all these things were said in the prophet Isaiah to be a sign of the Messiah
- Some people seek signs because they are into the sensational aspect and miss the message being confirmed. (John 6:2-the crowd followed because of the healing of the sick)
- Some seek signs because they hope to get something out of it...for selfish reasons. John 6:26 "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill"
- Some seek signs to excuse unbelief
 - If you can't produce the sign, it isn't real, it confirms I don't have to believe
- Listen to Matthew 16:2-3
 - He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."
 - What were the signs of the times? The Messiah and all the prophecies and happenings that led up to the Messiah
 - They DID NOT want to see Him as the Messiah
 - They were blinded by their want to see Him a something other than that
 - So...Jesus responded and said in verse 4, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign"

Verse 12

- And He sighed deeply in His spirit
 - This sigh was just an "oh boy" kind of sigh, it was deep, heart-felt grief, sadness, frustration, and amazement. This was deep emotion
 - Jesus' response, John Calvin says, was born of grief that people who had seen so much of God's work through His Son would remain so obstinate. Calvin draws this lesson: "All who are desirous to promote

the glory of God, and who feel concern about the salvation of men, ought to have such feelings that nothing would inflict on their hearts a deeper wound than to see unbelievers purposely blocking up against themselves the way of believing, and employing all their ingenuity in obscuring by their clouds the brightness of the word and works of God.”

- Why does this generation seek a sign?
 - Who is right in front of them? Jesus, the Messiah. There have been plenty of signs, but they couldn't see the most obvious
- Matthew 16 adds that no sign will be given, 'except the sign of Jonah'
 - What is that?
 - God told Jonah to go to the Ninevah and tell them He would destroy them if they didn't repent, but Jonah did not want to go so he fled a different direction by boat. So God sends a storm so big that the professional seamen feared their life and through stuff overboard for fear their boat would capsize. Eventually they through Jonah overboard and he was stalled by a great big fish where he remained for 3 days and 3 nights. After the 3rd day, the Lord caused the fish to spit up Jonah onto shore.
 - Matthew 12:39-41, when the Pharisees at an earlier date ask for a sign, Jesus tells this to them as well.
 - “But Jesus replied, “Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. “The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here— but you refuse to repent.”
 - We can see that the Pharisees could not see the sign for what it would represent. They were unwilling to see it because they could not see it. They could not see it because their hearts were hard to the things of God.

Verse 13

- And He left them
 - Jesus is cold hearted. These are people that needed saving. These are people that obviously were missing the point! What kind of unloving God is this????

- He had nothing to do with Him. It had to do with the state of the heart of the Pharisees. Their motive was not ‘help me understand’. Their motive was to ‘make a mockery of Jesus’. It was to destroy Him and His reputation so they could feel good about what they were choosing to believe. They did not want competition for power. Their pride had consumed them to the point they could not see truth.

There are a few warnings I believe that God is giving us this morning:

1. There are people who are truly seeking God and there are people who are not.
 1. For those that are—may our eyes, ears, and hearts be sensitive towards that
 2. For those that are not—may we have wisdom, patience, and be deep in prayer for soft hearts towards them and for them to have hearts that will change
2. We must be careful to guard against having a hard heart
 1. Hard hearts come when we are not looking at all the signs, but only the signs we want to see. To be able to clearly see all the signs for what they are, we must look to God’s Word.
 2. The Pharisees hearts were hard. They could not see that greatest sign of all that was standing in front of them. The most blatant sign. The evidence of God in Christ. They had all the evidence of all that the prophets said manifested in front of them in the incarnate Son of God, Jesus. Their minds were blinded because they were lovers of self instead of lovers of God. They couldn’t see through the haze of their sin.
3. Too often we try and separate faith and reasoning. The gospel is the most reasonable truth there is, because it reveals who God is and reveals who we truly are. When we are consumed with gaining all we can, anger towards another, or choosing to live in our hurt as victims instead of the gospel, instead of the heart of God, the things of God get fuzzy. The more we are consumed with the things of this world the more fuzzy the things of God get, until we are unable we are to see the reality of God.
 1. Romans 1:18-20 tells us how fuzzy it becomes. So fuzzy, you can’t see the truth of God standing in front of you. “But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever

since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

2. The problem isn't seeing, the problem is receiving. God has laid out enough evidence, it's just a matter of if we are willing to investigate it and put our faith in it.
3. If we choose to ignore it, it leads to wickedness...to a heart against God, a heart that turns angry towards God, a heart that denies God. It's a slippery slope that leads to that place.

Jesus could have done all the signs imaginable and it would never have saved a single soul, unless that soul reached out to Him in simple, childlike faith! It isn't the miracles that save souls, it is faith. When faith touches grace the greatest miracle of all, the salvation of a human soul, takes place.

Jesus isn't in the sign business! He is in the salvation business! If you are waiting for a Damascus Road experience before you come to Jesus, you will probably be waiting a long time. Most folks don't get the dog and pony show. Most folks are convicted of their sins, drawn to Jesus and called upon to respond to Him by simple faith, **Eph. 2:8-9**.

If you are waiting on a sign, you might just go to Hell while you wait. Again, the greatest sign of all has already been given! Look to Calvary, and see a crucified Savior. Look to the tomb and see Him resurrected from the dead. If you can believe those two events and take them at face value, you can be saved, **Rom. 10:9!**

Next week, we are going to look at a group that wasn't hostile towards the truth, but just didn't get it. We will see the patience of Jesus to disciple and train and work with those that are receptive to Him.