

God's Signs

by Reuben Walter

God's signs are the ways in which He communicates with us, guiding us and directing us in our lives, and we need to have faith, wisdom, and understanding to recognize His true intentions.

Duration: 25:22

Scripture: Exodus 14:21-22, Exodus 17:6, Psalm 78:9-16, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:1

Topics: "Afflictions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the great privilege and responsibility of being a child of God. He urges believers to walk humbly and obediently before God, so that they can reflect the image of Jesus Christ to others. The speaker highlights the importance of discerning the signs of the times and not being like the hypocritical generation that seeks after signs. He references the story of the children of Israel and Jesus' rebuke of those who demanded more signs despite witnessing his miracles.

Transcript

Good morning, brothers and sisters, young people. May God's grace and His peace and His love be upon us this morning, as we gather to worship Him, as we gather to seek His face, His will, His heart, His mind, what's on His mind, what He wants to impart to us, and how we, as His sons and daughters, can enter fully into that grace wherein we stand. We're here today to speak of His word, speak of His love, to find out what He has to say to His children.

Brothers and sisters, being a child of God is a serious thing. It's not something that we can take lightly, nor something we take for granted. It is an incredible privilege that we have to be even called sons and daughters, those of us who are.

That puts a great responsibility on our shoulders. As we're saying in this psalm here, just look what He went through to be able to call us sons and daughters. Just look what He invested in us.

How much? There is nothing, He spared nothing to bring us to the Father, to bring us into sonship. All that's left for us is to make that choice, to follow Him, and to accept that engrafted word that is aimed to save our souls. Life and the cares of life, we tend to forget.

We tend to let this glorious truth be diminished in our lives. That glorious work that He did on Calvary, of how He reconciled us to the Father, that is something that we should never ever take lightly. That should

be before our eyes so constantly and continuously that we even can see the nail prints on His hand.

That is the one and only way we can be pleasing and acceptable in His sight, that is to know what a great cost it was to deliver us. So it's not something small, it's something big. It's a great privilege and a great responsibility on our part to now walk before Him humbly and obedient as His sons and daughters so that we can portray that image of Jesus Christ upon those who are still walking in the dark, upon our young people, upon those who haven't accepted Christ yet, upon those who are going through rebellious stages in their lives that they may see in us a risen Savior and be convicted in their lives and want nothing more than the same thing.

Brothers and sisters, that's a great responsibility on our part. Let's bow our heads. Heavenly Father, we come before You this morning to worship You, to honor Your holy name, Father.

We as Your children, we don't know what's best for us, but You do, Lord. We just pray for grace today, for strength, for Your Holy Spirit's leading and direction, for Your guiding, Lord, and may the words of our mouths be the words that come out of Your mouth, Heavenly Father. May they not be words of men, but the very heart of Your Son, Jesus.

May He reveal Himself to us, Lord, and make us see our need and also make us see Your love, Heavenly Father, and find a true balance in our Christian walk, to walk before You as true children of God, to walk before You humbly and broken, and to be more rather willing to suffer and die than to give up on the hope that we have in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. As a way of introduction here this morning, I'd like to speak about God's signs.

We tend to think of different things when we think of signs. When we think of signs in Scripture, we think of narratives. When we speak of signs today, we think of something that tells us something.

And as I was pondering about this this week, I was wondering, how do we hear God's voice? How do we hear when He speaks to us? It's clear that He doesn't come, He's never done it to me, He doesn't come and tap us on the shoulder and say, Son, I'm disappointed in you here. Or, Son, I'm glad you did this here. He doesn't come and do that.

And I was wondering, wouldn't it be nice sometimes if He'd give us a more sure, physical or some kind of a word that we could lay hold of and say, Yes, for sure I know God has spoken with me. For sure I know, I heard His voice physically. He's never spoken to me that way.

He's spoken to me in my heart, laying things on our hearts. But it's so much a walk of faith yet. So much where we just simply believe the word that's there, we trust it, and we have no sign, no real open physical sign to tell us, Yes, you're on the right track, No, stop what you're doing, or so forth.

You know, we live in a world that's actually accustomed to signs. We see signs all the time. Those of us who travel a lot know even more about it.

There are signs when we go down the road. They tell us how far, they tell us which direction we're going, which direction to a certain place. They tell us the speed limit, yield, one way, stop.

All those signs are intended for something. Signs that tell us caution, slippery, up ahead, or a sharp curve. These kinds of signs, we're used to them.

They're an integral part of our life, especially when we're traveling down the road. We're so accustomed to them, we just accept them. We know they're there, and they're there for a purpose.

They're there for our protection. Those signs are there to help us get to where we want to go, to help us to our destination. And all they do is they stand there beside the road.

They don't jump out at us and grab us by the scruff of the neck and say, hey, listen to me. We can choose to obey them. The signs are there.

And to get us from point A to point B, it's very wise for us to obey those signs. They don't force us. They just tell us up ahead there's danger, sharp curve, slippery bridge, a stop sign, a yield sign.

And we, by default, because we took our driver training, we know what we got to do when we reach those signs. We know how fast we should go. They're there to show us, often just, some of them don't give warnings.

Some of them just tell us we're going on the right way. We just keep the speed limit and the load limit and whatever else. And we can choose to obey those signs.

We can choose to disobey them. We can choose to stretch them a little bit. And we may get away with it for a while.

But as we all know, most of us have experienced already, sooner or later that catches up with you. If you stretch that speed limit sign one of these days, it will catch up with you one way or the other. We know about those signs, don't we? Quite clearly.

Signs are intended for our good. Signs that tell us the things we need to know. And it's clear we don't need the signs all the time.

Very clear. The signs are only there at certain spots to give us the proper directions and the proper information that we need for that period of time. It would seem senseless for a highway department to fill the road up with signs every 20 miles or 10 miles when we already know certain things.

They're only there maybe whenever a new approach is on the road or something like that, just to show us, give us the information that we need to know. And as I was thinking about this, this is a very important spiritual lesson. And to start off, I'd like to turn to Psalm 78.

I'm going to speak of one of my favorite topics, the children of Israel. As you've probably guessed already. Psalm 78, verse... Here it's speaking of... We can start at verse 10, I guess, or 9. Here it's speaking of the children of Israel back in the wilderness.

Back in the time when God led them out of Egypt and into the promised land. And it says here, The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back on the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law and forget His works and His wonders that He showed them.

Marvelous things did He in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt and in the field of Zohar. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through. He made the waters to stand up as a heap.

In the daytime also He led them with a cloud and all the night with a light of fire. He claimed the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers.

And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God.

They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, He smote the rock that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? Can He provide flesh for His people? Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth. So the fire was kindled against Jacob and anger also came up against Israel because they believed not in God and trusted not in His salvation.

We get a picture here. The Israelites did not have their covenant yet, at least not at the beginning. And God had to display Himself mightily amongst them.

And He did. The signs were there from day one all the way through the wilderness that He was with them. He gave them all the signs they needed to assure their hearts that He was their God and that He was with them.

And it says here, Yet they sinned the more and provoked Him and said, Can He furnish a table in the wilderness? They were eaten off the table every day in that table in the wilderness. They were eaten the manna, the heaven's bread. They saw that pillar of fire every single day or night at least.

And during the day it was a pillar of cloud. It guided them, it showed them, it was there. Now we will think today that well if we have signs like that today it will be easier for us.

We won't be as stubborn as the Israelites. I think that's to be disputed. Sometimes I wonder if we're not very much like those Israelites.

Yes, God does not give us such great signs today as He did the Israelites. But the question is, does He give us signs? Does He give us directions? Does He show us when it's slippery up ahead? Does He show us slow down, yield, stop? Does He speak with us today this way? With Israel it was very clear that the signs were there, that He was their God and yet they refused to acknowledge Him. Yet they said, Is He with us? At one point they asked, Is God with us or not? Man, they saw that pillar of cloud sitting above the tabernacle.

Where did they think they got it from? They went out that very morning to get the manna and yet they said that. For us to look back at it now it blows our mind. Why would people do that? And for sure, if He'd give us such visible, clear and dramatic signs today we would probably react differently than they did.

But I've come to the conclusion that He has given us signs and that He is giving us signs. All the time, through our lives He speaks with us. And I'd just like to give you a few questions here.

Just something to ponder and to think about. First I'd like to read, go back to Matthew, Matthew 16. Matthew 16, verse 1. Here Jesus again, back to His people, performing miracles, preaching the kingdom of heaven, giving the good news to the people, showing God's love for them, healing the sick, cleansing lepers, opening blind people's eyes, just doing one miracle after another, turning water into wine.

And the Pharisees, also with the Sadducees came and attempting desire Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. Now why on earth would people who've seen such great miracles ask for a sign? What's wrong? And He answered them and said unto them, When it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. In the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering.

O ye hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky, but can you not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas, and he left them and departed. Look at the strong words that Jesus used here. If they didn't believe the signs that He performed among them, what kind of sign were they asking for? What kind of sign were they seeking if the ones that were performed in their very eyes were not good enough? That's a very serious question.

What kind of signs were they looking for when this wasn't enough for them? Let's think about it. It clearly shows that signs are useless to unbelievers. Signs help nothing if someone is persistent in unbelief.

Signs play no role. He sees them, he chooses not to acknowledge them. He chooses not to acknowledge how God works in our lives.

Today we definitely, I'd say we have as many signs today as the children of Israel had, as the Jews had at Jesus' time. They're just not as dramatic, I'd say. Just not as obvious because He's given us another sign.

And that's His Word. Just the fact that we're sitting here today and speaking from God's Word, from the Bible, is a sign. This book has stood the test of time.

This book has been... There's no other book in history that has had so many signs. No people have ever tried to eradicate something as desperately as God's Word. And it's with us today.

More than 2 billion copies of the Bible have been sold. If that isn't a sign, well, then we need to ask God, well, show us a sign. Show us a sign that you're there.

We're just as unbelieving as the Jews of Jesus' day. So what are some of the signs He gives us if He gives us signs today? Are His blessings a sign? Can we count His blessings for a sign? And if it is, the question is, which one is it? Are His blessings a sign that we're well favored? Just a question. Is sickness a sign? How about our regular physical health? Are these signs, are circumstances we find ourselves in often? How do we interpret them? How about mishaps? Accidents, or something, cuts and bruises, whatever.

Do we interpret them as something, as a stop sign, or a yield sign, or a goal sign, or whatever? What do we see when something comes our way? And I'm speaking from my own experience. It's sometimes very difficult to notice how God is speaking with me. The Lord gave me signs a few years back, and it took me a couple of years to figure out what the sign was.

Because you didn't understand the signs. We don't understand how He deals with us today. Yes, if He'd come with a mighty voice and a roar of thunder, or some kind of physical that we could perceive, yes, then we would believe.

But we tend to not think that way. How about defeat, when we're defeated in a certain area? Is that a sign, or is it a result of not obeying a sign? That's a good question. And it's often hard to distinguish.

But we'll talk about this later. Our lack of seeing. Our children's behavior.

I think often God speaks to us through our children. He speaks to us through so many circumstances, so many situations. And what we need is to be in tune with God and to know when He speaks with us.

And it's not as simple as when He speaks with us, it's what is He saying? That is an important question, is to know what He is saying. We can interpret the signs in probably the opposite way God intended them. That's where we need faith, wisdom and understanding.

Some of us are prone to interpret the signs on the other guy. That's not God's will. When God gives me a sign, it's a sign for me.

That He wants to get my attention. That He wants to lead me on a higher path. That He wants to show me what is still un-Christ-like in my walk with Him.

How do we recognize Him? Do we need multiple confirmations? Let's turn back to the story of Jesus.

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