

Here's Your Sign! – Matthew 12:38-42

Introduction: Bill Engvall has made this line famous in his comedy routine in which he proposes that stupid people should have to wear signs that just say, *"I'm Stupid."*

Here's an example. He said, "I got stuck behind a big rig that wedged his trailer up underneath an overpass and me and the trucker are waiting on the side of the road on the tow truck driver. The patrolman pulls up and looks at the guy's rig and he looks at the trucker and said, 'You get your truck stuck?' And without missing a beat, the trucker says: *'Nope. I was delivering that bridge and I ran out of gas. Here's your sign.'*"

In this chapter of Matthew, Jesus was discussing His deity with some of the scribes and Pharisees, which they doubted and couldn't believe, when one of them made one of those kind of "Here's Your Sign" statements. They said, *"Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you"* (38). In other words, Jesus, if you could just give us a sign, we would believe that you are the Christ. Jesus told them, in essence, *"Here's your sign – I've already given you the sign of Jonah, which is a picture of my death, burial and resurrection."*

When Jonah was discovered running away from God and the cause of the storm they were in, those sailors threw him overboard. As far as they and everyone else were concerned, Jonah was dumped, discarded, left for dead.

But God knew where Jonah was, and God still loved him and had mercy on Jonah, so he created this big fish which came along and swallowed him up. He was buried in the belly of that fish for three days and three nights. As far as anyone else knew, he was dead and gone. But God knew better. God wanted to show an old disobedient and runaway prophet that He was still in control and He could still make this man useful. So He gave that big fish a whale of a tummy ache and caused him to vomit him up on dry land. Old Jonah was literally given a new lease on life.

And Jesus was telling these skeptics that this miracle of God was all they really needed to believe. He told them, *"a wicked and adulterous generation asks a miraculous sign."* But you're not going to get any more than what has already been given.

But since that time, people have still looking for signs. For example, people think they have found the shroud Jesus was buried in, the tomb He was buried in, a box with Jesus' name inscribed on it, and on and on. And in all their searching, they're saying, *"If this were the sign, we'd believe!"*

If you follow to the Pharisees' line of thinking, you'd be saying, *"I wonder if God really wants people to believe in Him because He hasn't given us much to go on."*

But God does want people to believe in Him and He's given us plenty of evidence and signs to make an informed decision.

In book after book of God's Word, God makes statements like: *"so their generations would know..."* So *"all the people of the earth might know..."* He's always worked in such a way that people could know that He alone is God and they could know Him personally. Now He may not be literally parting seas or killing giants with slings and stones today, but He's given us all the evidence we need to come to Him in repentance and faith.

After John had written of Jesus turning water into wine, healing the sick, raising the dead and many more miracles, He wrote in **John 20:30-31 (NIV)** *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

I don't know your heart. Maybe you're here this morning and you're like the scribes and Pharisees. Maybe you know something about Jesus, but you're not convinced that He's the Son of God and that can save you. Maybe you're saying, *"If He'd only give me a sign I'd believe."* But listen, the signs are everywhere. Let me give you just a few. First, He's given us the sign of:

1. Creation - The Bible says *"In the beginning God..."* The existence of God isn't argued or defended. It's simply proclaimed.

Paul said in **Romans 1:20 (NIV)**: *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."* He's saying that one of the clearest signs God ever gave to man is His creation! Look around! You don't have to have a degree in Theology to figure out that the Creation needs a Creator! From the smallest

organisms on earth to the vastness of our solar system, every atom and molecule runs with an exact precision that nothing could cause but God Himself! Next, He's given us the sign of:

2. Noah's Ark - The story of Noah's Ark is an animal lover's delight. But listen, it's not just about rescuing animals – it's a picture of Jesus rescuing us! It's a story of God bringing judgment to the earth because of man's sin. But He found Noah to be a righteous man and told him to build an ark of safety. So, by faith Noah built a huge boat, big enough to hold his family and two of every species of animal on the face of the earth, to protect them all from a flood that was coming. By the way, do you know where Noah kept the bees? In the archives!

Anyway, he built this boat because God told him it was going to rain and flood the earth even though it had never even rained before. And by faith Noah loaded up his cargo, got on the ark, God shut the door and kept Him safe from the judgment that came and destroyed all those who wouldn't believe.

It's was a sign from God that sin would be judged. His wrath was coming. We don't know when but by faith we believe it is. Jesus is our ark of salvation. By faith we come to Him for safety. And when we do, He shuts the door on salvation, He seals us with His Spirit, and it's a done deal. But He's also given us the sign of:

3. The Exodus and Passover - These were two other dramatic signs of salvation and deliverance. Jacob's children were in Egypt because of a famine, and under the leadership of a friendly Pharaoh and Joseph, and they were blessed there. But over time, a new Pharaoh came to power, and he made slaves of God's people. He put tough taskmasters over them. They were in bondage and no relief was in sight, so they began to cry out to God for help. God sent Moses to deliver them. But Pharaoh refused to let them go, and it was only after God judged Egypt with a series of horrible plagues that they were released.

The last of the plagues was the death of every firstborn male of every family in Egypt. It was a terrible plight that was brought on by the hardness of Pharaoh's heart. But for the children of Israel, God provided a way to avoid being smitten by the angel of death. They were told to sacrifice a lamb that was without spot or blemish. They were to apply its blood to the doors of their homes and when the death angel came through that night it would pass over the homes that were marked by the blood of the lamb.

That too is a wonderful picture of Jesus. He is our Passover Lamb. He was without spot or blemish. He was sacrificed for us, and when His blood is applied to the doors of our hearts, God doesn't look at us with all our faults, He looks at the blood of the Lamb who was without sin!

Well, after the Passover, which the Jews still celebrate, they marched out of that nation carrying gold and silver and clothes and a lot more. They left that land and into freedom! It all points to the deliverance God would bring to a sea of humanity that was in bondage to a taskmaster called sin – which is a slave owner that does not want to let go! But Jesus paid the price and has freed us from sin and has made the way possible for every one to leave that land and go on into freedom! It's a wonderful sign of deliverance and salvation.

But there are a couple of wonderful signs in the New Testament as well. God has given us the sign of:

4. Baptism - Baptism is a wonderful picture of what Jesus does for us in salvation. Christ died for us and was buried, but something else happened. We're going to celebrate it in just a couple of weeks. There was resurrection from the dead.

The apostle Paul said, *"...I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"* **1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NIV)**

He also said in **Romans 6:4 (NIV)** *"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

Now listen carefully, in and of itself, baptism is no different than the Old Testament sacrifices, the sign of Jonah, Noah's ark, or any other picture of salvation. It has no saving power. But it is a beautiful picture of salvation. It's a testimony and a picture of the gospel that we're to present in our own lives when we come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior so that others might see the picture and want to meet the Savior!

Finally, there's one last sign I want to mention this morning. God has given us the sign of:

5. The Lord's Supper – The elements of holy ordinance of the church speaks volumes about the salvation Christ offers.

The broken bread is a reminder of the broken body of the Lord who gave His life for the sins of the world.

The fruit of the vine reminds us of the shed blood of Jesus at Calvary. **Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)** says that *“...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”* of sins.

Like Baptism, partaking of the Lord’s Supper doesn’t save you, but shows us a picture of the One who does! It’s a sign from God that proclaims in picture the Jesus who died for our sins, who shed His blood so we might have the forgiveness of sins.

Conclusion: When we stop and look at the Word of God like that, we discover that the Bible is not just a book of stories about people. It’s a story of Jesus. It’s all about Jesus and the salvation He came to offer! From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible shouts to the world, *“Look – here’s Jesus!”*

So there are signs everywhere. But people still looking for a sign! *“If God would heal my loved one! If God would just get me through this ordeal! God, show me something miraculous, and I’ll know you’re real. Give me something I can feel, or I won’t believe in you!”*

You don’t need any more signs to let you know God is real and at work in your life. He’s already given plenty of signs and evidence of who He is. This Bible says, all *“these were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His name”* John 20:31 (NIV).

How many more signs do you need?

If you haven’t given your life to Christ because you’re waiting for a sign, you’ll probably still be waiting this time next year and the next. You don’t need any more signs that He can save. There’s something that’s keeping you from seeing the evidence. It’s your lack of faith. Well, He’ll give you that too. Eph 2:8 says, *“For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...”*

So don’t go on what you can see, God is not willing that you or anyone else should perish, so just trust in the unseen hand of God who has already removed every obstacle that could possibly be in your way of coming to Him. Just trust Him today.