MYSTERY & MAJESTY

– 15 –

Read the Signs

- Matthew 16 is a hinge in Matthew.
- The narrative segment that began with the people of Nazareth failing to acknowledge Jesus' true identity (CH 13), will end next week with Peter correctly recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Discernment is not seeing more than everyone else.
- It is recognizing what God has already revealed and knowing how to respond.

Matthew 16:1 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

- Pharisees and Sadducees often were bitter rivals
- They joined forces against Jesus because they saw him as a threat against their leadership and power.
- They disagreed on theology, tradition, resurrection, and even how to relate to Rome.

- They want Jesus to prove his credibility by performing for the crowd.
- Matthew 12:38 they did something similar trying to find something to use against him.
- Matthew 4 the devil does the same thing.

Matthew 16:2-3 2 He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ 3 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.

- Jesus isn’t calling the stupid.
- He’s pointing out an irony and failure to discern.
- They ignored when Jesus fed 5000+, then 4000+, healed the sick, cast out demons, revealing the kingdom of God.
- The signs of the times are not just some reference to end times. It is ignoring what God is doing now.

The sons of Issachar:

- One of the tribes of Israel is Issachar
- Known for their discernment when the kingdom was transferring from Saul to David.

1 Chronicles 12:32 Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do,

- They recognized the realities of their time and knew how to respond wisely.
- Discernment should lead to Christlike wisdom, not arrogance, harshness, or spiritual showmanship.

Matthew 16:4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed.

- "Adulterous" here is not only sexual language.
- It is covenantal language: they want God plus something else.
- Stop asking for more signs and read the signs that are in front of you.
- What have you done with what God has already revealed to you?
- What is the sign of Jonah? Matthew 12 talked about this.
- God gives them a crucified and resurrected Messiah and an empty grave. That is God's sign. A sign that is meant to lead them to repentance.

Romans 2:4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

So ask yourself:

1. What is God already showing me?
2. What truth have I delayed obeying?
3. What conviction keeps returning?