

Matthew 12:38-50

"The Kingdom Sign"

Have you ever wanted a sign or sensed that God gave you a sign? What if God gave you the ultimate sign, would you want to become a healthy member of God's family?

Jesus is our king and the calling realm:

When Jesus is your king you accept your responsibilities as part of a community of faith to serve God by serving others.

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Intro: Have you ever wanted a sign? Jesus tells us the greatest sign confirming He is our savior - the resurrection.

Subject: The Kingdom Sign

Object: Trust Christ and Experience His Resurrection Life

Context: The unpardonable sin, healing of demon possessed, blind, mute man

I. **The Key to Resurrection Life: Faith (v.38-42)**

A. The Sign of Jonah (v.38-40)

The Pharisees want to see a sign - note: they just saw him heal a demon possessed blind mute man and presumably some of these same Pharisees had seen Him heal a man with a withered hand earlier in ch 12.

Jesus calls them evil and adulteress - unwilling to believe and unfaithful to God

12:10 - that they may accuse Him: their heart was to try and disprove

The sign of Jonah: resurrection - in the belly of a fish for 3 days

" And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!" - 1

Corinthians 15:17

No one tried to deny it (no one could produce the body)

Pliny the Younger (A.D. 61 or 62-113) in A.D. 111 to the emperor Trajan "I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them, nor the grounds for starting an investigation and how far it should be pressed.... They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly *before dawn on a*

fixed day [Sunday in remembrance of Jesus' resurrection] to chant verses alternatively amongst themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god..."

Lives were changed, people were willing to die

Jesus resurrection was celebrated in the earliest church creeds- 1 Cor 15:3-4 says "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." A.D. 30-36.

How can you and I experience this power? We need to believe

B. The Faith of Nineveh (v.41)

People of Nineveh extremely evil: had kidnapped and ransacked Israel, brutal
Jonah doesn't even want to go preach to them

" And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them." - Jonah 3:4-5

God invites His enemies to become His family

Gentiles, Jesus better than Jonah

They believe and turn from their sin

C. The Faith of the Queen of Sheba (v.42)

Sheba was the Arabian Peninsula – the proverbial end of the world, but she traveled great distance at great hardship and cost to seek wisdom from Solomon and then honor God.

"Then she said to the king: 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you *and* hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.'" - 1 Kings 10:6-10

Jesus is greater, because He is the wisdom of God, & King of kings (Cf. Solomon was a great king, and wise from God)

II. The Fruit of Resurrection Life: Transformation (v.43-50)

• A. Resurrection Life Goes Deeper Than Behavior Modification (v.43-45)

Jesus says its not enough to just get your house in order: You will still have a spiritual void - You need a new tenant! - strong man

"Jesus did not come into the world to make bad people good. He came to make dead people live." - Ravi Zacharias

Pharisees prided themselves in their moralism and devotion - this would not save them, and it cannot save us!

The Jews went through cycles of submission to God, and rebellion + idolatry. The only way to break the cycle was to receive Messiah.

I still fall into this all of the time: I think I need to impress God and it's my job to try and change myself rather than bringing my mess to Him so I can experience His resurrection life.

B. Resurrection Life Gives Us Power to Obey God (v.46-50)

Our obedience doesn't earn our place in God's family, but the fact that we are in God's family changes us

Because we are alive and are new people, we are able to walk in obedience and victory!

C. Resurrection Life Brings Us Into Jesus' Family (v.50)

John 7:1-5 Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him

note: James one of the ones Jesus appeared to 1 Cor 15

Communion: Jesus died and rose so you can experience resurrection life. Allow God to search your heart to reveal areas of doubt so you can bring these to Him and experience more of His power!

Pastor Bruce Zachary

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Have you ever wanted a sign or sensed that God gave you a sign? What if God gave you the ultimate sign, would you want to become a healthy member of God's family?

Subject: The sign the kingdom has come

Object: Be a healthy family member

I. Resurrection [38-42] The resurrection is the sign the kingdom has come

A. The desire for a sign [38-39] Some of the scribes & Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign,

1. Skeptics demand a sign: The religious leaders sought a miraculous sign (e.g. make the sun stand still) to test and oppose Jesus.

a. Signs referenced the heavens, and miracles reference works on the earth

b. They were **evil [39]** willfully blind in that they refused to consider the evidence. They were **adulterous** in that they were unfaithful to God

2. Jesus had already: healed lepers, the blind, demon-possessed (mute), & restored life to the dead, which were all evidence that He was the Messiah.

B. The only sign God promised to give [39-40] no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

1. The resurrection is the foundational proof of the gospel:

a. As Jonah was 3 days and nights in the belly of the great fish, so Messiah would be in the grave **heart of the earth.**

i. Friday death on the cross and burial. Sunday resurrection. Jewish reckoning treats any part of a day as a whole.

1Cor. 15:17 If Christ is not risen our faith is futile ...

2. The resurrection is supported by evidence beyond a reasonable doubt: evidence for an unbeliever to believe, and to strengthen the faith of a believer

a. What is some of the evidence of the resurrection?

i. **Missing body:** Cf. suspects – Jews, Roman guards, disciples

ii. **Transformed lives:**

iii. **Martyrs**

3. Those who repented and sought God's wisdom testify against those who reject and demand another sign [41-42] The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. ⁴² The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.

a. **Rise up:** In Jewish and Roman courts witnesses stood to present testimony

b. **Ninevites [41]** When Jonah rose from the belly of the fish, and preached coming judgment the Ninevites repented. And Jesus is greater than Jonah.

c. **The Queen of the South [42] [1Ki. 10]** Sheba was the Arabian Peninsula – the proverbial end of the world, but she traveled great distance at great hardship and cost to seek wisdom from Solomon and then honor God. Jesus is greater, because He is the wisdom of God, & King of kings (Cf. Solomon was a great king, and wise from God

d. The witnesses were Gentiles who did not have the Scriptures. The Jews who did should have recognized Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy re the Messiah.

4. The reality of Jesus' resurrection changes everything:

a. Sin, death, hopelessness and death are defeated

II. Regeneration [43-45] The need to be regenerated [born-again] When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. ⁴⁴ Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

1. A rebellious spirit returns where there is a spiritual void: an unclean spirit departs, and a person's life improves, but there is a spiritual vacuum. The demon can return with others and the condition is worse than ever.

a. The Jews went through cycles of submission to God, and rebellion + idolatry. The only way to break the cycle was to receive Messiah.

2. A regenerated spirit is more than moral transformation

a. Need the Holy Spirit to fill void rather than trying to simply clean up your life

i. Moral problems of violence, crime, abuse, pornography, excess: drugs, alcohol, and gambling can't ultimately be remedied by behavior or attitude modification

3. A remedy: man's tendency to rebel against God is only remedied by Christ

III. Relationship [46-50]

A. Jesus' mother and brothers send for Him [46-47] While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. ⁴⁷ Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

1. Well meaning unbelieving relatives don't understand Jesus mother and brothers were concerned for His well being as He cared for multitudes. They **stood outside** which is a picture of their spiritual condition since they did not yet understand that Jesus was the Messiah [Jn. 7:1-5].

a. **brothers:** James & Jude were Jesus' half-brothers (Mary is not a perpetual virgin)

b. Cf. Jews as relatives of Jesus should have understood but didn't (Cf. Gentiles)

B. Jesus' true family are those who do God's will [48-50] But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother:

Only those who do God's will are the family of God [Cf. Mankind is God's offspring]

1. God's will: believe in Christ, experience eternal life & resurrection [Jn. 6:40]

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day

a. **Belief in Christ refers to an attitude of dependence upon and actions of obedience to.**

C. Healthy family members mature, and accept family responsibilities and relationships

Communion: The resurrection is proof that Jesus' sacrifice was acceptable to God, but it is Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, not the resurrection that allows us to be reconciled to God. What motivates us to come to Jesus and receive Him, and become a healthy member of the family of God is not the evidence of the resurrection ... but the love of God displayed at the cross.