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Sign Seekers; Matt 16:1-4
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Introduction – Just a few verses back we studied the miracles of Jesus and observed that one purpose of Jesus’ miracles is that they were signs. The healing power of Jesus, the multiplying power of Jesus, the demon-commanding authority of Jesus, all of His miracles were signs. Signs that pointed to Jesus. Signs that visually, publicly, undeniably declared and revealed that given His astounding authority and power over every element of life, Jesus was indeed none other than God in the flesh. The miracles were signs that read in very large letters – Jesus is the Savior.

So here come the Pharisees and Sadducees asking Jesus to show them a sign, and He refuses. He refuses to prove to His foremost enemy and most dreaded opposition that He is God. Which begs the question why. Why wouldn’t Jesus just call down fire from heaven or something drastic and beyond question like that and set the record straight and once for all silence His foes.

The answer is found when Matthew slides back the curtain of their heart and allows us to see past their question and into their motive. They came to test Him. These Pharisees and Sadducees were actually theological enemies. They both believed the other horribly wrong theologically. They really didn’t agree on anything except that they both had to get rid of Jesus. They have come asking for a sign not in order that they might have reason to believe but rather that they might have further reason to accuse. They’ve already accused Him of breaking tradition and breaking the Sabbath, but those accusations failed to invoke public outcry. They need something to stick, but Jesus refuses to entertain their predetermined rejection.

- I. Sign Seekers are Never Satisfied with the Signs
 - a. Do these religious leaders honestly need one more sign to convince them, to compel them to faith? Really?
 - i. Jesus has cleansed lepers, healed paralytics, opened blinded eyes, freed the oppressed from demonic possession, fed multitudes with one meal, and raised a girl from the dead!

Some, if not all, had been eyewitness to Jesus' miracles. Do you really need one more sign?

- ii. And that's the issue with the sign seeker. In great irony the signs are never enough. They always need one more.
 - iii. There are those in our own day that are plagued with this same kind of endless asking for more evidence, more grace, more answered prayer. If God would do just this one thing for me, then I would believe. Tragically unable and unwilling to see that it is God who gives the very breath that makes the request for one more thing.
 - iv. Signs cannot save; they only point to the Savior. We don't need another sign; we need salvation.
- b. Furthermore, given all that Jesus has said and done up to this point, how blind and unbelieving and unrepentant must you be to then ask for a sign from heaven from the sign from heaven!
- i. That was the point of all the signs. This is the One from heaven! Believe. Trust. Repent. Follow. Worship.
 - ii. What more must God do for you to believe? He created you in His own image. He has given us His Word. He has given us His Spirit. He has sent His only Son from heaven to be among us, to live before us, to die for us. What else do we need to see?

II. Sign Seekers Fail to See the Signs

- a. These leaders read signs all the time. Sky signs. Weather signs. They were walking meteorologists. They were able to look up and discern that if these conditions are present, then we can expect this weather pattern.
- b. Interesting isn't it, that Jesus chose this sign-telling illustration to rebuke these sign-seekers. They were pretty good as reading signs that deal with the unpredictable but failed to read the signs that were without question. They were able to read the signs for the weather but not for the Savior. They could interpret these signs in the sky but couldn't read this sign from heaven.
- c. We read all kinds of signs. There are patterns of nature and patterns of life. The world works in certain ways. We can tell this will happen if that happens. If we do this, we can expect that. We have no problem reading signs.

- d. The problem is reading the signs that matter the most. We can tell when rain is coming but we can't tell when our children have drifted from the Lord, and yet the signs are everywhere. We can tell when the market is going to rise or fall but when can't tell when our lives are spiritually empty and yet the signs are everywhere. We can tell when someone needs urgent medical attention but we can't tell when our own hearts are dead and yet the signs are everywhere.
- e. We don't need more signs; we need spiritual sight!

III. Sign Seekers are Misguided by the Signs

- a. You see its what you do with the signs you have that indicate where your heart is.
 - i. In ch14 when Jesus walked on the water and calmed the seas, those in the boat worshipped Him and said "Truly, you are the Son of God." You see the signs were pointing to the Savior and the heart of faith could read that sign and see that sign.
 - ii. But then over in ch12 A demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus and He healed him such that he saw and spoke and the demon was gone. 1 man – 3-fold miraculous deliverance. The signs were pointing to the Savior. And the Pharisees said, "He cast our demons by the prince of demons."
 - iii. Signs are like a boat and hearts are like the rudder. No matter how big the sign, the heart will steer the sign to its own course.
- b. We don't need a sign; we need a new heart. We don't need another sign; we need spiritual sight. We don't need another sign; we need a Savior. That's exactly how Jesus ultimately answers their request for another sign.
- c. Jesus essentially says, "I'm not going to give you another sign right at the moment, but another final sign is coming – the sign of Jonah. Interestingly enough Jesus tells of this final sign in ch12 after the Pharisees accuse Him of being in league with Satan. Here He tells them again after they fain a request for proof. He tells them again. Twice now he has told them exactly what is going to happen to Him in the form of a sign so that when they see it they would know.
- d. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days, so will the Son of Man be in the earth three days. Just as the fish vomited Jonah out on

dry ground, so the earth will give up the Son. Just as Jonah was shown to be alive, so will the Son of Man be alive!

- e. What is the sign of Jonah? It is the greatest sign of all. All other signs point. This sign screams! All other signs show. This sign reveals. All other signs say “This has to be God.” But when Jesus, of His own authority and power rises from the dead, this sign says, “Behold, God!”
- f. This sign, the resurrection, the death of death, the defeat of the grave, the silence of the enemy, this sign reads “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live!”
- g. They asked with malicious intent for a sign, and Jesus ultimately gives them the greatest sign of all, and tells them twice what it is and what it means.
- h. And He dies, and He’s buried, and He lays dead in the tomb for 3 days, and then He rises – and they just don’t believe.
 - i. Because sign seekers are never satisfied. Sign seekers fail to see the signs. And sign seekers are misguided by the signs they do see.

Conclusion – The point is this: We don’t need a sign; we need a Savior. And thanks be to God, He has sent us a Savior. He is Jesus Christ the Lord! Believe Him today! Give Him your life today! Worship Him today! The signs are everywhere!