

Sermon Transcript

04.05.2026

Matthew 12:38-42

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- Good morning and happy Easter. My name is Geoff and I serve as one of the pastors here. We're taking a brief break from the book of Hebrews this morning in order to consider the resurrection of Christ from Matthew chapter 12.
- So as you turn there in your Bibles, I want to share a story I've told before, but its been 4 years so if you've been here since then, just act like you haven't heard it before. Its a story about mall walking. Now, if you immediately picture someone with a head band, socks up to their knees and orthopedic shoes, swinging their arms like there's no tomorrow speeding through Stonebriar then get that image out of your head because its not a pleasant image & that's not what I'm talking about at all.
- What kind of mall walking am I talking about? Well, a few years ago, I was doing some mission work at a little church plant in Kenya and at the end of the trip we headed back to Nairobi for our flight back to the states. But first we stopped for lunch at a shopping mall. We got there a bit early so most of my friends decided to do a little souvenir shopping before we ate. I looked around a bit, but I'd been to Africa a number of times before and there are only so many wooden giraffes a man needs so I decided to stretch my legs before flying economy for 17 hours.
- So I just started walking around the mall. After a few minutes I noticed some guy staring at me. I made a little loop around the mall & when I came back he stopped me & asked what I was doing so I told him I was about to meet some friends for lunch and was just walking around until then.
- He seemed appeased, said okay and that was that...I thought. And then I made the loop again and see this same guy but now he's joined by a security guard. Now this wasn't mall security like the Paul Blart, rent a cops you might see at the Galleria (no offense if you are a mall security officer, thank you for your service), this guy carried an AK47...so I'm instantly a bit skittish.
- Especially when he stops me and asks what I'm doing and I tell him I'm just walking around and he said, you can't do that. Its not permitted.
- As he says that, a couple of people literally walk past us. So I look around & think to myself: of all the people in the mall no one is standing perfectly still, no one is just sitting on the ground, no one has attained the gift of flight, no one is crawling. But there's a time and place for sarcasm and I sensed this wasn't it. Instead, I just managed to say "but everyone is walking" because literally everyone that I can see with the exception of Mr. Security Guard, Mr. Tattletale & myself are walking.
- And he says: they are shopping. And I say: well I was shopping. But you're finished so you should leave. But I'm about to meet some people to eat in the food court. Then you should go sit in the food court. But I'm not meeting them right now and when I went to the food court, they wouldn't let me sit until I'm ready to eat.
- Well, it not permitted. What's not permitted? Walking. But everyone is walking.
- It was like an Abbot and Costello skit.
- So now I'm thinking, maybe I've just misunderstood something. Maybe something is lost in translation. Maybe this guy didn't like the way I walked as if my style of walking was inappropriate...But for whatever reason, something about what I was doing threatened this security guard and I had apparently broken some unspoken but very important rule.

- That's kinda what happens to Jesus in our text this morning. He hadn't broken any actual law, but the religious leaders of his day, the rent a cop security guards of the Mosaic mall were threatened so they stop him and say, why are you doing what you doing, what gives you the right and authority. Show us your credentials, your license, your passport. This is not permitted.
- And Jesus isn't confused by the question. He points directly to His authorization, His authority, indeed His kingdom, His glory.
- What does this have to do with Easter? Let's pray and then we will dive in together to see.
- Self, others, me.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." (Matthew 12:38)

- To understand this passage, we have to know what's happening in the greater context of Matthew 12. Jesus and His disciples have just been rebuked for picking grain to eat on the Sabbath and then Jesus doubles down on the Sabbath by healing a man with some sort of withered hand. He then heals a man oppressed by a demon and so the religious elite accuse Him of having a demon.
- But the Sabbath stuff in particular was a huge source of contention. In the Old Testament, we have something called the Mosaic Law, which was the 613 commandments handed down by God to Israel through Moses. Of those commandments were various regulations for the Sabbath, the 7th day of the week. Israel was to sanctify it which meant among other things that they should not work on the Sabbath.
- This Mosaic Law was a constant source of tension between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes, two overlapping groups of 1st century Jewish leaders. In particular, Jesus had two main critiques concerning the religious elite of His day.
- First, they focused on externals while neglecting internal desires. They preached against adultery, but tolerated lust. They commanded giving, but tolerated greed and so forth.
- The 2nd critique is that the Pharisees & scribes had taken the Mosaic Law & expanded it. Whereas the Law said that you couldn't work on the Sabbath, the Pharisees lengthened and widened the prohibition. They said that you couldn't walk further than this many steps, or carry this heavy of a load, or light or extinguish a fire because those were deemed work.
- Let me give you a modern illustration of this same sort of thinking that persists in modern Judaism. If you happen to visit Israel today you'll find that elevators run much more slowly on Saturdays. In fact every hotel will have at least 1 Sabbath or Shabbat elevator which stops on every floor. My first time to Israel I thought the elevator was broken. My second trip, I just messed with my friends and told them to take that elevator while I tied my shoe or something. 30 minutes later they would finally get to their room.
- Why does the Sabbath elevator stop on every floor? So you don't have to press a button. Why does that matter? Because pushing the button causes a spark and a spark is considered lighting a fire so you can't press the button without breaking a tradition against lighting fires. That's kind of what 1st century Pharisees did. They burdened people with traditions & taught them that those traditions were as binding as God's word. They built a wall around the law. You don't want to break God's law, so you create manmade laws to cordon off the area.
- Its like my experience as a kid at the Grand Canyon. There are some rails to prevent you from falling off, but my mom made us stand like 20 feet from the railing so as to not risk it. That's what the Pharisees did. They expanded the rules and made them unbearable.
- For example, look at Christ's critique later in Matthew 23:

- *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. (Matthew 23:4)*
 - *You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! (Matthew 23:24)*
- And in Mark 7, He says this:
 - *You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. (Mark 7:8)*
- The caricature of a Pharisee that we often think about is someone who loves God's law, but in reality, they don't love God's law, they love their own law and their own interpretation and authority. As Jesus says later in Mark, you make void the word of God by your own tradition.
- So rather than loving God's law, they thought it was insufficient, imperfect, inadequate.
- Ironically some of the most Pharisaical people you'll ever meet actually disregard God's word.
- By the way, this isn't just a first-century or 21st century Jewish problem, we see that same tendency in the garden when the woman claims that God had said that they must neither eat nor touch of the fruit of the tree and we see this same inclination in churches today. God says, do not get drunk, but churches say never drink. Scripture prohibits sexual immorality, but churches prohibit all dancing just to be safe. Again, if God's law is insufficient and imperfect, we create our own.
- But anyway, Jesus was constantly crossing these pharisaical fences, this wall around the law. Jesus never broke the actual Mosaic Law, instead He perfectly fulfilled it, but He often broke these manmade traditions, these Pharisaical accretions.
- So you can get a feel for why the scribes & Pharisees are riled up in the context of Matthew 12.
- Jesus is disregarding the traditions and thus the authority of the Pharisees & the scribes. And they rightly perceive that as a threat.
- So they want to get to the bottom of this. They say, show us a sign. Prove yourself. Show us your license to teach and heal and cast out demons.
- Ironically Jesus had just shown them a sign. In fact He had shown many signs. He healed a man with a withered hand and cast out a demon. That literally just happened. He had just shown a sign. But it wasn't enough. Show us another. And another. And another. Disbelief and pride are never satisfied or satiated. There is always a demand, a craving, a lust for more.
- Even today, some in this room might be questioning this whole resurrection thing or this whole Christianity thing and think, if only I had a sign I would believe. If God would just prove Himself to me then I would believe. The problem with that is at least two-fold.
- First, it's terribly arrogant to demand that God prove Himself. That's not the way this works. We're in no position to demand anything from God. He owes us nothing but condemnation. We have all sinned, we've all transgressed his laws. We merit nothing but judgment. So that's the first reason we aren't in a position to be making demands. We don't have the upper hand. We aren't the good guys, we don't hold all the cards.
- Second, we're by no means objective. We like to pretend that we are, we assume that we're able to make an objective analysis of the claims of Christianity, but in reality, we're inherently biased. After all, if the resurrection is true, if Christianity is true, we cannot be impartial. Because these truths make demands upon us, like faith, repentance, morality, etc. So we're all naturally motivated to disbelieve the evidence.
- That's why even faith is a gift, a grace, in Christian theology. Grace must overcome our reservations and hesitations and skepticism.
- As Christ says elsewhere in the gospels, discipleship carries a cost. It costs us our comforts and conveniences. It costs us our right to self-determination and autonomy.

- If the resurrection is true, that implies Christ's lordship, and if He is lord, then I am not my own. My life is not my own. But if I'm fundamentally committed to my autonomy and ego, then I can't be objective and neutral about those demands.
- So we're naturally prejudiced to not see what is actually evident. Disbelief never sees a sign as a sign. It will always explain it away.
- When you reject the Scriptures and the miracles of Christ and the resurrection, you aren't actually humbly seeking proof and confirmation of truth, you're failing to recognize the authority of the evidence and protecting your innate desire to not submit to the rule and reign of another.
- That's what's happening here...the Pharisees and scribes aren't interested in truth, they're interested in their own power and authority and privilege. This isn't a good faith request for help, this is a direct challenge to Christ's authority. Let's see how Jesus responds in vs. 39.

But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." (Matthew 12:39)

- Jesus had just shown a sign that these Jewish leaders had ignored and they had no intention of actually believing any sign from Him. Remembering this helps clarify His response.
- Requesting a sign isn't always sinful in Scripture, but it is in this particular context because Christ has already shown sign after sign after sign. So the request is merely disguised pride & unbelief. Mark and Luke's parallel accounts make that clear. They are testing him, arguing with him. These aren't humble requests for confirmation, but proud attempts to disprove and discredit Him.
- So rather than wondering and worshiping at the signs, rather than resting in Christ's glory and authority, the Pharisees and scribes put Him to the test which is an evidence of an evil and adulterous heart.
- Now it might sound a bit harsh or mean to you to call others evil and adulterous, especially if you imagine Jesus speaking softly and gently and with a bit of a lisp and always being nice and politically correct. Never saying anything offensive.
- But that picture resembles Mr. Rogers or Mary Poppins more than Jesus who made a whip and drove people from the temple, and called religious leaders whitewashed tombs, a brood of serpents, hypocrites, blind guides, children of hell, evil and adulterous.
- Nice politically correct people don't get crucified. Christ is offensive because the truth is offensive.
- Was He a shock jock, just throwing out insults willy nilly? Of course not. But when the situation demanded a strong rebuke, He was willing to deliver it.
- As Mr. Beaver says of Aslan, he's good, but not safe.
- So why does He call them an evil & adulterous generation? Because they were. This was no novel accusation. The prophets of Israel offered the same critique over and over and over throughout the OT. In other words, some things never change.
- In fact, nothing will ever change apart from grace. This isn't just a critique against first-century Judaism, but indeed every generation of every culture that has ever lived. Which means that you and I are right beside the Pharisees and the scribes being critiqued by Christ. Humanity itself is plagued by wicked, evil, adulterous hearts. Every man, woman, and child among us.
- As Romans 3:9-18 says
 - *What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have*

become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:9–18)

- That's mankind apart from divine grace. That's you apart from grace. Unrighteous, unseeking, spiritually worthless, wicked, wretched, helpless, hopeless. If you were expecting a happy little sermon this morning telling you that you're beautiful and talented and good enough, smart enough and gosh darnit people like you, then you're in the wrong church. In fact, you're in the wrong religion. The resurrection of Christ only makes sense in light of His death and so the good news of Easter cannot be understood apart from the bad news of our inherent depravity.
- The gospel isn't you are so good that God saved you, it is God is so good that He saved really bad people.
- Before you can rejoice in the resurrection, you have to feel the weight of crucifixion, the gravity of depravity, the severity of sin.
- If you and I were good, morally upstanding, righteous, virtuous, or noble then the sacrificial slaughter of Christ wouldn't have been necessary. But we aren't and so it was as we've been exploring all year in Hebrews.
- And Jesus points out this underlying sinful disposition of the human heart. He calls it out. Our enemy is within, our problem is our evil and adulterous hearts. Your greatest enemy isn't your husband or wife or parents or neighbor or coworker or that jerk who cut you off in traffic, your greatest threat arises from within your own chest. You are the bigger threat to your joy.
- And Christ says, there will be no sign given which will appease the heart's lusts, but there will be a future sign that will serve as the final definitive confirmation of His authority. He calls it the sign of Jonah.
- If you grew up in Sunday school you remember Jonah. Angry guy swallowed by a big fish.
- Let me give you a brief preview by way of summary. Jonah was a Hebrew prophet. And he loved home court advantage. You tell him to rebuke a Jewish king, and he's all about that. But he didn't really like away games. So when God tells him to go to Ninevah, the largest city in the world at the time, the capital city of Assyria, archenemies of Israel, he instead goes the opposite direction. Hops on a boat to Tarshish.
- Things are initially pretty good on his little Mediterranean pleasure cruise until a big storm arises, he is thrown overboard, a big fish swallows him, he's in the belly of the fish for a few unpleasant days until the fish vomits him up on the shore at which point he has an epiphany and realizes that its hard to play hide and seek with an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God, so he thinks I should probably go to Ninevah. He gets to Ninevah and proclaims the word of God and something interesting happens. The people repent.
- To understand why, its helpful to grasp a bit of their religious context. In the Assyrian pantheon of gods was a so-called god called Dagon, the fish god. He was often pictured as half man, half fish, like Aquaman or Ariel's dad King Triton, a merman.
- So for a people who worshiped a fish god, the fact that Jonah was swallowed up and vomited out by a great fish was a fairly obvious sign of the greater power & authority of YHWH.
- The seaweed still clinging to Jonah's cloak and the stench of fish guts and decomposing plankton were signs to believe in the power and authority of YHWH, the LORD God. Likewise, the scars in His hands, feet & side, the empty tomb, the gospels, & the hundreds of witnesses to His resurrection are signs to believe in the power and authority of Christ Himself, the LORD God. Let's keep going. Vs. 40.

For just 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. (Matthew 12:40)

- So now we see the analogy. Just as Jonah was buried in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights, so will the Son of Man, a nickname for Jesus from the book of Daniel, be buried in the belly of the earth.
- What happened after those three days and nights? That's the resurrection. That's Easter. We'll get to that. But first, what about this whole three days and three nights thing?
- You ever wonder, how can it be said that Jesus was in the heart of the earth for 3 days & 3 nights if He died on Friday and rose on Sunday morning?
- Anyone who has ever booked a hotel, knows that Friday-Sunday is 3 days & 2 nights not 3 & 3.
- So what do we do with that?
- Well, some would want to just dismiss this as an inconsistency or contradiction. The unbelieving heart justifies its unbelief. But there are compelling and adequate responses to this seeming discrepancy. For example:
- First of all, we need to recognize that Jesus isn't saying that these two things are exactly alike. An analogy isn't just like what it symbolizes. When I was a kid and I would play basketball with my dad he would always stick his tongue out whenever he was driving to the basket so we would say that he looked like Michael Jordan. Now, my dad was 5'8" and half Japanese. No one has ever confused my dad for Michael Jordan, but in one particular way, they were similar. They both stick out their tongues when they played basketball. But the similarities pretty much end there. Different heights, athleticism, skin color, net worth. Likewise, with this analogy that Jesus is giving. There is similarity between Jonah and Jesus, there is similarity between a belly of a fish and the belly of the earth, there is similarity between the time that Jonah is in the fish and Jesus is in the grave, but they are not the exact same.
- So what does Jesus mean by saying that He will be in the belly of the earth for 3 days & nights?
- Instead of thinking that tradition has gotten the day of Christ's death wrong for 2000 years or that the Bible is inconsistent, we should understand that this is an idiom. What's an idiom? A phrase whose meaning cannot be understood simply by understanding the meaning of the individual words.
 - We use them all the time.
 - For example, we talk of a wild goose chase, or bigger fish to fry, raining cats and dogs, killing two birds with one stone, and letting the cat out of the bag. And those are just some of the animal related idioms. None of these are literal, they're figures of speech whose meaning isn't determined by the individual words, but rather by the phrase itself. Let the cat out of the bag doesn't mean you have a literal cat in a literal bag. Trust me, if you ever get a cat in the bag, the last thing you should do is let it out.
- Likewise, the phrase "day and night" was a Jewish idiom, a common expression that would cover just about any portion of a day. We even have examples from the Old Testament of the phrase three days and nights meaning on the third day. So the phrase "three days and three nights" just points to portions of three days. That's it. He was in the grave part of Friday, part of Saturday, and part of Sunday.
- So don't get tripped up on the whole three days and three nights thing as if that's a contradiction or inconsistency. BTW, this is the way that all claims of contradiction go. The issue isn't that the Bible is actually inconsistent, the issue is that we're biblically illiterate and spiritually lazy and

don't want to do the hard work of trying to figure out how it fits because, again, our flesh doesn't want it to be true. It is easier to dismiss the Bible than it is to submit to it as the Word of God.

- Now, what's the sign that He's talking about?
- Let's start with Jonah. What's the sign to Ninevah? Not that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. Lots of people have gotten swallowed by a fish. Quint from Jaws, Samuel L. Jackson in Deep Blue Sea, Gepetto and Pinocchio, most of the characters in Sharknado I would assume. So getting eaten by a big fish doesn't prove you're a prophet. Anyone can get eaten by a fish, but not everyone can live to tell the tale. Anyone can go into a fish, it's the coming out that's the miracle. That's the sign.
- Likewise with the sign that Jesus is referencing. Being in the heart of the earth isn't the sign. That just means He's gonna die. You know who else died? Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth, Julius Caesar, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, even Chuck Norris. In fact, everyone dies. But not everyone has risen from the dead.
- So being in the belly of the earth isn't the sign, rising from the belly of the earth is the sign. The resurrection is the sign.
- And what does a sign do? It signals something, it symbolizes something, it demonstrates something and calls for a response. So what does the resurrection symbolize?
- Lets look at our final two verses:

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Matthew 12:41-42)

- This is the sign: something greater than Jonah & Solomon is here. We'll get to that. But first, let's look at the two illustrations that he gives: the men of Ninevah and the Queen of the South.
- BTW, both of these are from the OT. Apparently Jesus doesn't think we should unhitch ourselves from the OT. Jesus expects His people to be familiar with the stories of Scripture. If you know who Luka & Messi & Taylor Swift & Ryan Gosling are, you should recognize references to the men of Ninevah & the Queen of the South, or as she is known in 1 Kings, the Queen of Sheba.
- And that only comes by reading the Bible. It can be confusing & takes discipline, but I assure you that if you will just read it & read it again, it will progressively make sense to you. Its like the first time watching an episode of a show that you've never seen. Maybe there are all kinds of inside jokes that you just don't get and characters you don't recognize. But thankfully we have Hulu & Netflix so we can go back & watch the series & all of a sudden it makes sense. So just read the Bible & I promise you that the picture will grow progressively clearer over time.
- If you have tried reading & you just can't make sense of it, let's grab coffee and chat. I'd love to help. I don't bring this up to shame you if you aren't familiar with the OT, but instead to encourage you to not be complacent with a lack of familiarity because its kind of hard to understand how the new is better than the old if you don't know much about the old.
- Back to the text, Jesus gives two examples from the Old Testament of Gentiles who have some sort of positive response to the preaching of the kingdom of God. That doesn't necessarily mean that all Ninevites or this Queen experienced eternal salvation. Again, it's an analogy.
- What is the analogy? Jonah was a powerful prophet. Solomon was a powerful king. Well, Christ is greater than both. He isn't merely a prophet who speaks for God, but God Himself. He isn't

merely a king who rules in the place of God, but God Himself. The eternal, co-equal 2nd person of the trinity.

- Jesus said something similar a few verses earlier:
 - *I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.* (Matthew 12:6)
- Those who are following along with our Hebrews series probably sense the typology here. As a reminder, typology is the study of God-ordained analogies between the old and new testament marked by correspondence and escalation. By correspondence, we mean that there is similarity, but by escalation, we mean that Jesus is better...or to use the word here in Matthew 12, greater.
- The temple, like the tabernacle we've been talking about in Heb was merely a physical place where heaven & earth overlap...where man meets God, but Christ is greater because He is the godman, the person in whom heaven & earth overlap where man can be fully & forever reconciled to God.
- In other words, this passage is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If pagan Gentiles repented at the preaching of Jonah raised from a fish, how much more should Jewish leaders repent at the preaching of the Son of God raised from the dead? If a pagan woman rejoiced at the glory of King Solomon, how much more should the religious rejoice at the glory of King Jesus?
- What's Jesus doing here? He's saying that all the offices and institutions of the Old Testament are shadows but He is the substance. Jonah is a picture, Solomon is a picture. The temple is a picture. Each of them pointed to something greater which was to come. But Jesus is the reality, the substance, the fulfillment, the thing signified by the sign.
- The difference between the symbol and the fulfillment is like the difference between holding a sonogram and holding a son or daughter. I rejoiced when I saw an image of my children on a screen, but it paled in comparison to the joy I experienced when they were born. Likewise, if men & women repented & rejoiced at the pictures that Jonah & Solomon & the temple provide, how much more should we rejoice at the coming of the one to whom those pictures point?
- Jesus is the greater prophet, the greater priest, the greater king and the kingdom of God is what this entire text is ultimately about.
- When the Pharisees and scribes ask for a sign, what are they asking? That's a kingdom question. They are asking, by whose authority are you doing these things?
- In the context of Matthew 12, Jesus had already answered that question. He had given proof, verification, validation of His authority. He had a letter imprinted with the divine seal.
- A few verses earlier, when He had cast a demon out of the man, He said,
 - *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.* (Matthew 12:28)
- By whose authority? The King. In other words, this whole passage is about the kingdom and the kingdom is what Easter is about because that's what the gospel is about. That should be a word association in your mind. When I say gospel, you should think kingdom. When I say kingdom, you should think gospel. Like peanut butter and jelly or salt and pepper or fathers and dad jokes, so gospel and kingdom are joined at the hip.
- Look how Mark begins his gospel in chapter 1:14-15.
 - *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* (Mark 1:14-15)
- Look at how the gospel & the kingdom of God go hand in hand. Or in Mt 4, even more explicitly:

- *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.* (Matthew 4:23)

- So what is the gospel? The good news of the kingdom of God. What's that mean?
- Well, imagine all the way back to Genesis. What happens in Genesis 3? Theologians call it the fall. Sin enters the world. But before that, we have Genesis 1-2. Creation, perfection. God looks upon the world and says, this is good and very good. Work, marriage, worship. All good.
- But then Genesis 3 happens and everything is fractured. Not only does sin enter the world, but death, destruction, disease, abuse, chaos, cancer, and on and on we could go.
- Now imagine a world with none of that chaos. No sickness, no sin. No death or disease. That's the kingdom of God. The kingdom is marked by no obstacles or hindrances to the rule and reign of God.
- That's what Jesus inaugurated. That was what His ministry pointed to. Jesus' miracles aren't neat magic tricks or illusions to impress disciples & pick up girls. When Jesus drives out a demon or heals a man with a withered hand, those are signs that the kingdom has begun, that He's pushing back the darkness, putting the creation back to rights, overcoming the fractures of the fall.
- In the kingdom there is no demonic oppression or disease so Jesus gives signs of that coming day & says that even now it has begun. As we talked about last week in Hebrews, we see that there is an overlap between this present age and the age to come. The end times began with the advent of Christ. We call this inaugurated eschatology. The end times has been inaugurated.
- One day we will know the fullness of the kingdom when Christ returns & makes all things new, but even now we see signs of the already in the midst of the not yet.
- And Jesus didn't just come to rid us of demons & disease, He came to conquer sin & death. So He died as a sacrifice for our sin...& rose again as validation/justification of His authority. That's the sign of Jonah, the sign of resurrection, the ultimate, consummate sign of the kingdom of God.
- So follow the logic of the text. The resurrection will serve as a sign, verification, validation of the kingdom of God, the authority of Christ Jesus, and as a result, we should repent. What does resurrection have to do with repentance? Everything.
- Throughout the book of Acts we see just that pattern. Let me give one example from chapter 2 and Peter's first recorded sermon about a month after the resurrection. Look at Acts 2:23-24
 - *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.* (Acts 2:23-24)
 - *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.* (Acts 2:32)
 - *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.* (Acts 2:36)
 - *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:37-38)
- So the resurrection proves the lordship of King Jesus which beckons us to repentance. How so? Because it proves that He is sovereign and sin is futile so our only hope is to accept His terms of peace, to lay down our arms, to turn from sin and to trust in His mercy.

- If Ninevah repented at the preaching of Jonah, how much more should we at the preaching of Christ crucified & risen? If the Queen of the South was astounded by the splendor of Solomon's wisdom & riches, how much more should we at the glory of the wisdom & riches of King Jesus?
- What if you aren't amazed and what if you don't repent? The text points to 1 word: condemnation. The men of Ninevah and the Queen of the South will rise up in condemnation. If the penalty for rejecting Jonah and Solomon was severe, how much more the penalty of rejecting King Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the second person of the trinity...the only Savior and hope for humanity.
- But for all who would see and savor Christ and believe and repent, there is grace and mercy.
- Christ has died. Christ is risen. So repent and believe. Let's pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- As the elements are being passed, I want to ask a few questions for you to consider in light of this passage.
- First, do you believe this gospel about the kingdom of God and the resurrection of the King?
 - If not, what are your concerns, questions, hesitations? Will you be honest and courageous enough to voice those questions or concerns with whomever brought you or chat with one of our elders or deacons?
- Second, do you live a life of repentance as a result of this gospel of the kingdom?
 - A little over 500 years ago, a German monk nailed 95 theses to a door in Wittenburg. The first of those theses was the idea that all of the Christian life is repentance. Turning from sin and toward God. Does repentance mark your life? Not a mere one-time act, but a daily turning away from sin? You cannot have peace with God and with sin, so which would you prefer?
- Third, do you live in light of the hope of resurrection?
 - About 10 years ago on Easter I had the flu, but as Jordan had his flu game, so was this my chance to shine. And on that day I had a meeting with a couple whose life had unraveled that morning as this wife had found out that her husband had been cheating on her. What a horrible start to Easter.
 - But in the course of that conversation with the husband and wife, we talked about the meaning of the resurrection. If God could conquer death and resurrect the Son, then surely there is no marriage that is too dead, no doubt too deep, no despair too dark for the light of the gospel to penetrate.
 - So do you live in light of the hope of resurrection? In what areas of life do you fail to recognize the kingdom of God and the power of the Spirit? Marriage, parenting, work, finances, struggle with pornography, whatever it might be.
- You see, communion is an opportunity for us to look inward and to consider our sin, but also an opportunity to look outward and consider our Savior. It is an opportunity to look backward upon the death and resurrection of Christ, but also an opportunity to look forward to His return and the consummation of the kingdom when all things will be made new. And that's ultimately what Easter is about. A little hint, a little glimmer, a little sliver of what is to come because as Christ has risen so shall you be risen. Those who believe and repent will be raised to everlasting life and joy while those who do not will be raised to eternal judgment and despair.
- So with that in mind let's partake with glad and hopeful hearts.
- The body of Christ broken for you.
- The blood of the new covenant for the forgiveness of sins.
- Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.