

Faith in the Home: Sermon Notes and Applications

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 7:10-17, "Sign from God."

"Lord, just give me a sign!" For some, this phrase may seem a little dramatic, however, there are times where we wish the Lord would "hurry up" and fix a situation that we are in. Cancer? "God, please just cure it!" Trouble at work? "God, solve it!" Short on cash? "God, help!" (In the way I want you to!) Don't like who is in office? "God, why do allow that political party to win?" Continuously struggle with a certain sin? "God why I can't you help me just stop sinning?" Loved one doesn't believe? "God, show them a sign!" But maybe you are having a crisis of faith, and you want God to give you sign. In Matthew 16, Jesus actually says that it is "wicked to ask for a sign." (In other words, "If you are God, prove it!") More on that in moment.

In our text today from Isaiah 7, the prophet Isaiah went to meet with King Ahaz on the road. If you read about Ahaz in 2 Kings, he was judged by God as a wicked, evil man. Yet, here in Isaiah where Ahaz's heart was shaken with news of war, God sent his prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz to encourage and to give a him a sign. Ahaz received the word from God should have made him jump for joy. Isaiah told him that fall of Jerusalem would not come to pass from the nations that were joining together to conquer Jerusalem. Further more Isaiah told Ahaz, "To ask the LORD for a sign."

Now, while it is wicked to ask for a sign from God, it is also just as wicked to refuse a sign from Him. Ahaz refused to ask for that sign even though he was being told to. He said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." While this might seem pious Isaiah, the prophet of God invited to ask him for a sign "as high as the heavens and as deep as Sheol (Hell)."

Isaiah gave him the sign anyway. And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

We here that verse every Christmas, and obviously for good reason. God would be born of a virgin. That truly is miraculous. First that a virgin could conceive a

child, and even more so that God would become a man. The creator would become part of His creation. The creator would become one of His creatures. Along with that miracle, God would begin to solve creation's biggest problem. That problem put simply, was our rejection of God.

Immanuel roughly translated from the Hebrew is "With us God" or "God with us." God came to be with us through Jesus. And many signs were given by Jesus. The virgin birth, the blind regaining sight, the lame walking, Jesus' walking on water to name a few. Chief of all these signs His resurrection from the dead, following His crucifixion and death on the cross.

We do not need signs that we are forgiven, or that we have salvation, or even that God loves us. We have received those signs starting with a virgin conceiving a son. We have assurance of God's love because Jesus is that assurance.

How do we teach and model these things to our kids.

1. Remind them that Jesus is the ultimate assurance of God's love.
2. Pray with them.
3. If your kids understand what the myth of a genie is, you can explain to them that praying to God is not like rubbing a magic lamp and getting your wishes granted. (Praying is better because God wants us to go to him more than three times anyway.) That being said it is important to assure them that God does answer prayers, and that He does love us.
4. We have to teach our kids that God may not answer our prayers right away.
5. The struggle that we all have is being able to tell when God does answer those prayers. It may be clear and simple, or we may never know how he answered us.
6. When we pray for big issues in our life, we need to all remember that the biggest issue is already covered. "God is with us!"