

# Wise Christians Are Careful

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Turn your Bibles to me to Matthew chapter 16. Now the first thing that Jesus is going to talk to the guys about is seeking signs.

And that's not really that strange a thing because it's a very big thing that goes on today. I remember being in Peru and on a constant basis, Mary would appear somewhere.

The Catholic Church would have to come out and confirm, did she appear there or didn't she appear there? I remember years ago in Conyers, the Virgin appeared at Conyers, Georgia.

And they were selling water that came out of this fountain. And so people like it when they see some kind of sign that God is real.

And then the Charismatic Church is very big in that. They want to see, I can remember when I was a kid, they would heal people. Their legs would grow. One time on television, a guy got a whole new set of teeth in his mouth.

[ 1 : 0 4 ] They prayed and God just put all new teeth in there, they said. And so their signs are a part of what people like. What does Jesus say about that?

Because they come to him in Matthew chapter 16. And the Pharisees and the Sadducees are together. And they come to tempt Jesus. They come to test him.

They come to try to trick him. And they want him to show a sign. Read with me, if you would, Matthew chapter 16 and verse 1. They are seeking signs.

The Bible says in 16.1, the Pharisees also with the Sadducees. So we got a whole bunch of Pharisees. Got some Sadducees sprinkled in the way it's kind of written there. And they came tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

So they came and said, Jesus, man, we want to see you do some miracle. We want to see you show your power. And he's going to tell them this morning, just like it's written in the other parts of your Bible in 1 Corinthians, we walk by faith and not by sight.

[ 2 : 1 0 ] We don't go by what we see. We go by what we believe that the Word of God says. We trust God's Word. If you got your Bible open in chapter 16 and verse 1, you need to circle the word tempting.

You need to circle the word tempting. They came. They didn't really want to see a miracle. They didn't really, they just wanted to figure out a way to mess with Jesus, to mess him over.

They came and tempting desired him. So circle the word tempting. Remember, these people have seen Jesus feed 5,000 people, men, not counting the children and the women.

They've seen him feed 4,000 people. They have seen him restore the sight to the blind, make the deaf people hear. They have actually seen him grow new limbs on bodies that were maimed, had a limb cut off.

They've seen that happen. But they come asking Jesus for a sign. I think they've seen plenty of signs. Their goal here is to tempt him or test him.

- [ 3 : 12 ] They're there to just mess with him. These are the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They are the religious community. They are the people that are the big religion. And the Pharisees are the most popular group of their day.
- And they desperately want Jesus to fail. Can they challenge him and make a fool of him? Can they get him to just show off his power? Are they really interested in seeing his power?
- They still haven't seen enough to believe. They've been seeing miracle after miracle. We're in the last part of his ministry. We're down to six months before he dies.
- He's been doing big stuff for over three years. They know who he is. They know how powerful he is. They're just there messing with him. But you're going to learn a lot of big things from that.
- They want to see something else. They can't see because they refuse to believe. Somebody said, the world says if I can see it, then I can believe it. The Bible says if you believe it, then you'll see it.
- [ 4 : 13 ] So you're going to trust God's word, not what you see. That's what the Bible lesson is going to be. Jesus doesn't do things to show off or to be seen.
- It's really a question of do you believe the Bible or not? If you need a sign, you're saying, I don't believe the Bible. If you're saying, God, I know I got your word written.
- And I know what you say, but I'm not really sure you're here. God, I know what the Bible says, but could we see a miracle? Could you do something great? Could the pastor speak in tongues? Could the pastor walk on water?
- I remember in Peru, a guy came up to me. His name is Tomas de la Cruz. And he came up to me and he said, Pastor, are you going to believe this? I can float one and a half feet off the ground when I'm in the spirit. I said, get in it real quick.
- I want to see that. I said, I'd like to see you just come up a foot and a half off the ground and just float in the air. And he said, well, I'm not in the spirit right now. I said, well, get in it. Amen. So they want to see a sign.
- [ 5 : 09 ] They want to see a sign. You need something you can see and feel instead of just believing what God says. Remember, only unbelievers want to see a sign.
- You're in a Baptist church. Boy, if you've got any charismatic leanings and all you like, boy, they're dry. No Holy Spirit. God doesn't work there. Things aren't great there. I mean, there's nobody running the aisles and nobody speaking in tongues and no crazy and wild stuff starting or happening in the service.
- The pastor doesn't heal anybody. I've gone to church here week after week. All he ever does is read the Bible, talk about the Bible. I don't ever see anything. Well, here's what the Bible says. You got your Bible open? Look at Matthew chapter 16 and verse 4.
- Mark it, put a star beside it, and remember what the Bible says in Matthew 16, 4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonah.
- And he left them and departed. Jonas or Jonah. Now look at this, if you would. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. Now stop a second.
- [ 6 : 16 ] Who is that? Who's the wicked and adulterous generation? Well, in the Bible, when you use the word wicked, you're talking about the opposite of the word righteous. Righteous are born again.
- Wicked are going to go to hell when they die. The wicked are people who are still in their sin. We were all wicked before, but after we saw our sin and came to Christ, he made us righteous.

We became the righteousness of God. He made us the righteousness of God in Christ. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21. And so we know we're not the wicked ones.

Who wants to see this sign? The wicked. Who want to see it? The adulterous. In the Bible, when the word adulterous is used, it's not usually, a lot of times anyway, it's not talking about physical adultery.

In this passage here, it's not talking about people that are committing adultery. The term was used in a religious or spiritual sense. When you're not faithful to God, you worship another God, he called you an adulterer.

[ 7 : 15 ] So an adulterous generation. An adulterous generation is a group of people who are not faithful to the God of heaven and worship other gods. So when Jesus looked at these Jews and he said, a wicked and an adulterous generation, they seek after signs.

He was saying, you got to be lost and not love God if you want to see signs. That's rough. I mean, if you preach that today, you'll get in trouble.

But Jesus said, you guys are here. You want to see something fancy. Now, don't forget he can work miracles, but he doesn't do it. He doesn't do things to show off. He doesn't do things to say, whoa, watch me.

I'm God. He doesn't do that sort of stuff. He said, so you came here because you're a wicked and adulterous generation seeking after a sign, wanting to see so you can believe.

Wicked and adulterous. Now, you need to understand something. I would like to challenge you. We are a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-studying church.

[ 8 : 16 ] That's why I hope you came with a Bible in your hand. I hope you have a copy of the Word of God, and I hope you are marking it and studying it and learning it, because this is the authority.

One of our basic tenets, one of our basic principles that we believe is the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. There's only one way we know what's right.

There's only one way we know what our faith ought to say. It's not because the preacher says something. It's not because all the churches got together and had a council about it. It's because what does the Bible say?

You say, well, what do we do in our practice? Well, the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice, and that's what we believe. Now, watch. Do you do know that people who hunger after a sign can be fooled?

People that hunger after what they can see can be deceived, because you can trick them. And in the Bible, we're warned that in the days to come, Satan himself will begin to deceive people working miracles, doing signs and wonders.

[ 9 : 17 ] You ought to mark this down in your Bible. Write it in the margin of your Bible, so when you study it later, you'll see the passage. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9. The Bible says, Even him whose power is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.

The Antichrist will come. The Antichrist will come. 2 Thessalonians 2. This is the guy who's against Christ. It'll be a world leader, and he's against Christ, and he will step onto the scene, and he will have the working of Satan, and he'll have all power.

He'll be able to do great things, and he will do signs and lying wonders. Jesus did stuff, but it was true. Jesus did stuff, and it was really God working, but this other guy will come deceiving.

Here's a passage of Scripture you have to read with me. Revelation chapter 13 and verse 11. Revelation chapter 13 and verse 11. And we're talking about the Antichrist and the false prophet.

We're talking about the satanic trinity. We're talking about all the junk that's going to go on in the tribulation period. And look at what it says in Revelation chapter 13 and verse 11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

[ 10 : 30 ] And he exercised all the power of the first beast that caused the earth, and then was dwelled therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. Here's what happened.

The Antichrist is going to get this wound, and the false prophet is going to be able to heal him and make everybody worship him. So you've got this wild stuff going on. They're watching, and boy, great stuff is happening.

Look at verse 13. And this false prophet, this lying wonder, this deceiver, does great wonders. He can make fire come down from heaven on the earth and the sight of men like Elijah did.

Remember? He deceives them that dwell on the earth. Listen. He deceives them by the means of those miracles. He deceives them by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.

And the sight of the beast saying to them that dwell on the earth, they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and to live. Then he makes the image speak. In the next verse, in verse 15, he makes the image speak.

[ 11 : 29 ] So I want you to look this way just a second. We don't follow signs and wonders and miracles. We're not looking for God to confirm that he's really God by making it rain or stop raining.

We're not asking God to prove that he's really there because he does miraculous things. We take his word for it. We believe God.

We're not saying, God, if you'll do this big thing, I'll believe you. Now, when I was young, I'll be honest with you, I was really hung up on wanting to see God do something. I wanted to see a miracle.

But by the way, if you see one, you'll have to see another and just keep believing. Was that one a fluke or can you do it again? You say, how do you know that? Well, there was this guy named Gideon in the Old Testament. And he wanted to know if God wanted him to do something.

So he said, God, I'm going to allow the fleece. And if it's really you, wet my fleece and nothing around it. And he did. And the next day he said, well, wet everything but the fleece. I need you to prove you're really good.

[ 12 : 28 ] That's the way humans work. We're like, if I saw a miracle, it wouldn't be enough. I'm going to do a miracle to confirm the miracle. Because I don't believe you when you do stuff. That's basically the story here. And so it comes back down to our verse.

Look, if you would, in Matthew chapter 16 and verse 4. He said, I'll only give you one sign. So he's going to give them a sign. But look at verse 4.

A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given unto it. But I will give you one sign. The sign of the prophet Jonah.

And he left them and departed. Now, as a wise Christian, you should not be seeking signs or things you can see and feel and experience. But you should be seeking the word of God and what it says.

True faith is believing what he said, not what you see. Judge everything by the word of God. Over the next 50 years, if you're alive that long, every one of us will have opportunity to doubt God.

[ 13 : 34 ] But somebody will come along and they will try their best to prove to you something's true by an experience. I've had so many people over the years say to me, I know this is true.

I saw it. I know this is true. I experienced it. That's not the truth. You know truth because God's word said it. Now, you could accuse me and say, well, you hold the Bible way too high.

Bring it on. I like all those accusations. Yes, I do. You can't get the Bible any higher in my mind. You couldn't say to me, well, I think you were. If you say you're exalted the Bible too high, I'd say, I don't get it up high enough.

It's the word of almighty God. It is the word of almighty God. And I do believe it. Now, only one sign was to be given. So let's look at that sign. If you would go with me again.

Verse four, underline in your Bible. I'll give you one sign, the sign of Jonas. Sign of Jonah. I'm going to give you that one sign. And he's already told us what that sign is. This is very important that you get this.

[ 14 : 35 ] He says in chapter 16, verse four, I'll give you the sign of Jonah. In Matthew chapter 14 and verse 20. Here's what the sign of Jonah is. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall also the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Okay, hold it. Look. Everybody, everybody in Israel knew about old Jonah. By the way, for those of you who have problems believing the Bible, Jesus believed it.

He believed the story of Jonah. That's like one of the craziest stories in the Bible. If you want to talk about something that's really wild, a big fish swallows a man who stays alive for three days. He vomits him up and he keeps on living.

That's impossible. Yeah, it is what God's in the story. And by the way, Jesus believed that story. When Matthew writes the story down, he said, let me tell you what Jesus said. Jesus said, if you want to know who I am and you want to know what sign I got, here's my sign.

Jonah. The story of Jonah. He didn't go. Well, Jonah was a made-up story, and so I'm a made-up story. He said, nope, Jonah's as real as I'm real. Now watch this. Here's the story of Jonah. Jonah gets into the belly of a whale.

[ 15 : 46 ] It's like being dead. He is in the belly of the whale for three days. In fact, in the Old Testament it says that from the belly of hell he cried out. And he's in the belly of hell. He's in the belly of the earth for three days.

And after three days he comes back to life. He comes back to the earth, and he goes out to do his ministry. So what's the sign of Jesus? Here it is. That nobody has ever been able to overcome death.

But Jesus is life. And they kill him. And they bury him. And by the way, when they killed him, he was dead, dead, dead. He was dead as a hammer.

He was dead. They put him in a grave. And they rolled the stone across the grave, and he was dead. He was really dead. He wasn't fainting. He wasn't in there asleep. He wasn't waiting for three days to get out.

He was dead. And he arose from the dead, and he overcame. That's the story. Now before I go on, you know why that happened, don't you? The reason that happened was the wages of sin is, help me.

[ 16 : 46 ] The wages of sin is what? See, the Bible says in Romans 6.23, for the wages of sin is death. And the Bible says real clearly that all have sinned. The Bible says in Romans 3.10, see if you can help me say Romans 3.10 if you would.

As it is written, there is none righteous. They're helping you. As it is written, there is none righteous. No, not one. Not one person is good on the planet.

Not one person ever except Jesus, who is God in human flesh, has ever been good. Right. Only Jesus. In Romans 3.23, it says, For all have sinned.

Help me say it. For all. Come on, help me. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Everybody comes up short. Nobody is good enough.

Nobody can go to heaven no matter how good you are. You can say, I'm a pretty good guy. I've done all right. I'm not as bad as other people. I'm a good person. I treat my family right. I do all these good things.

[ 17 : 45 ] But the Bible is clear. No, you're a sinner. You can try to, you see, like me, I mean, to be blunt and honest with you, I was raised in church. I was in church nine months before I knew it. In fact, it was probably longer than that because I don't think I knew it as a baby.

I was nine months before I got born. Then I've been in church all of my life. And to be honest, I sinned more after I got saved than ever sinned before I got saved. Now, seven, almost eight years old.

And so I'm saved because God's good. I'm not good on my own. All have sinned. I don't care who your mama is. Our son, Chris, who's a missionary pastor today.

Our son, Chris, was in church. And the guy was teaching in children's church. And the guy said, you need to be saved. And our son, Chris, tells the story like this. He said, they say you need to be saved. Chris sat there thinking, well, if anybody's saved in this room, I am my dad.

He's the pastor of this church. And so the guy said, I don't care if your daddy's the pastor of this church. And Chris said, well, he shouldn't have said that. And then some commented, your mama might be good, but that ain't enough.

[ 18 : 45 ] You're a sinner. And Chris realized that day I sinned against the holy God and I need to be saved. Every one of us got to get there. Amen. You're not going to heaven till you get there. You're not going to heaven till you realize you have sinned against the holy God and you deserve to go to hell.

But Romans 6.23 says the wages of sin is what? Death. But the gift of God is eternal life. And the reason that's so important is what you earn is wages and gifts what you don't deserve.

And somebody gives it to you and that's how we're saved. So why was the sign of Jesus to be Jonah? Jonah because Jonah was in a symbol dead. Jesus was dead literally.

He was in the ground three days and three nights and he rose again. And he did that to save us. Now you need to understand something. We don't preach salvation by your being good.

The Bible doesn't talk about you getting saved because you got baptized. My beautiful wife was christened as a baby and confirmed and sprinkled again when she was 12 and didn't get saved until she was 18.

[ 19 : 49 ] You can be baptized in every creek and Georgia or every bullfrog knows you by name and you still won't go to heaven. You must be born again. Can you say amen? And the way you're born again is Jesus paid the price.

Jesus paid the price for you to be saved. Jesus died and was buried and rose again. Look at what the Bible said in Revelation chapter 1 and verse 18. Revelation chapter 1 and verse 18.

Jesus talking said, I am he that liveth. I'm the guy that's alive and was dead. And look at here. I'm alive. Look at that verse. He said, I'm the guy that's living.

I was dead, but you look at me. Behold, I'm alive forever. Forevermore. Amen. And by the way, I got the keys of death and hell. The lesson was that they could kill Jesus, but he would rise again.

In John chapter 2 and verse 19, Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple in three days and I will raise it again. You see, the sign of Jonah was Jesus is God in human flesh.

[ 20 : 55 ] God loving you. God coming from heaven. God being in the flesh. God dying on the cross for sins he didn't commit and paying your debt. While Jesus is hanging on the cross, they're trying to figure out what placard they'll put above his head.

Because above their heads, they always listed their sins. They had none. They said, I find no fault in him. So they put king of the Jews. The truth is he was dying for my sin and for your sin that day.

That changed history forever. On the day of Pentecost, when Peter gets ready to preach, Peter says, let me tell you about Jesus dying. Look at Acts chapter 2 and verse 28.

And you need to know how he died and why he died. In Acts chapter 2 and verse 22, excuse me. You men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God.

God proved he was God by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you as you yourselves also know. But look at verse 23. Him, Jesus, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

[ 22 : 02 ] Now listen to this. You've got to listen to this. The story of Jesus is not the story of some sweet little baby born in Bethlehem that is going to get mistreated and killed at the crucifixion.

That's not the story. It's not that God came up with a secondary plan when they killed Jesus. Jesus came to earth to die. He came to pay our sin debt.

Underline in your Bible. Look at it right there. Determinant. God determined that if also would go to heaven, somebody had to pay his debt. If you would go to heaven, somebody would have to pay for what you did wrong.

And God determined and Jesus determined that it would be Christ. And he knew it was going to happen. Underline foreknowledge. God knew Jesus was going to die. Jesus knew that he was going to die.

In John chapter 2 that we just read, Jesus said, hey, I know what's going to happen. And over and over, Jesus warned him, I am going to die. Verse 24. Whom God, Acts 2, 24.

[ 23 : 03 ] Whom God raised up. He is alive. We don't serve a dead Savior. We serve a living Savior. He is alive. He has resurrected.

He rose up to heaven. He's seated at the right hand of God. He's in the body that he had. And he will return to get us. And by the way, verse 24. It's not possible that death would hold him.

There's no way death could hold life. Jesus died that we could be saved. Now listen to this before I move on. No signs. You want a sign?

He's already been working miracles. That's not enough for you? He's already been raising people dead. That's not enough for you? He's already been feeding 5,000 and 4,000. He's been restoring limbs. That's not enough for you?

Let me explain something to you. This is the only sign he'll give you. Sign of Jonah. Jonah. Dead. Buried. Rising. Again. It's through his sacrifice and death.

[ 24 : 02 ] And his victory that we have victory. In 1 Corinthians 15, 55. The Bible says, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?

The sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I've stood by the side of my dad's casket.

I preached his funeral knowing full well. I've stood by my grandparents knowing full well they knew Jesus. Death stings, but it's lost its sting. Death seems to have victory, but it's lost its victory because Jesus paid our sin debt.

And it gives us victory in him. So Jesus is the sign. You want to know what the sign is? Jesus. Jesus is the sign. It's his death, his burial, his resurrection.

Our faith is in what Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary and how he overcame the grave. No need to look for another sign. Just believe this. God loves you enough that Jesus died to pay your sin debt.

[ 25 : 09 ] God loves you enough that Jesus died to pay your sin debt. That's the sign. Now before I leave this, would you listen just a second? Give me just one second. You may be here and you may be a Baptist or a Presbyterian or a Catholic or a charismatic or a Methodist or whatever group you are.

Nobody goes to heaven for being Baptist. Nobody goes to heaven for being any religious group. Nobody goes to heaven because they've been put in water or not put in water, whether they were sprinkled or baptized. Nobody goes because they took the Lord's Supper or they went to Mass.

Nobody goes to heaven because they don't eat pigs. You go to heaven because you realized you sinned against the holy God. And the truth is every one of God's people stand going, I don't deserve it.

If I could get anybody in this church, and I could do it right now, I won't for the sake of time, but I could call them up by the dozens who attend this church faith, for they would all tell you they're not good enough to go to heaven.

They would all tell you they have failed God. They would all tell you that it's only the goodness and the grace and the mercy of God that we know him and we can be saved. You can be saved today.

[ 26 : 13 ] Trust Christ as your Savior. So, no sign. No sign. We're not looking for signs because a wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign. And there's only one sign that will be given, and that sign is the sign of Jonah and the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus.

The third thing you see in this passage is go down to verse 8. In verse 8, you see, he says, Oh, ye of little faith. 16, 8. Oh, ye of little faith. When Jesus, which when Jesus was received, he said to them, Oh, ye of little faith.

Why do you, why are y'all talking amongst yourselves? Why are you thinking we didn't bring any bread? And that's why he said to avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. So here's what ends up happening.

After they get through telling them there's no sign, the guys are thinking, man, we didn't bring enough for lunch. We don't have enough food for lunch. What are we going to do? And Jesus said, Hey, guys, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

And they start talking. He knows we don't have enough for lunch. He knows we forgot to bring enough sandwiches. I'm not believing this. He nailed us again. And he says, I know what y'all are thinking, boys. You're thinking it's about bread and peanut butter.

[ 27 : 22 ] That's not what the problem is here. I'm talking about you. I'm talking to you about something spiritual. And you're thinking about a ham sandwich. Well, it couldn't have been ham. You're thinking about a beef sandwich. Amen. An Arby's roast beef sandwich. That's what you got on your mind.

And so he said, Oh, ye of little faith. And I want you to understand that in a phrase. Oh, ye of little faith. In the Bible, in the Bible, that's a term he likes to use with us.



Oh, ye of little faith. Our little faith makes us not understand the lesson that Jesus is trying to teach us. It's our small faith. Our little faith is common in the Bible for men to confuse spiritual truth with something physical.

See, these guys are like, Oh, he's talking about sandwiches. And he said, I'm not talking about sandwiches. But if you recall, there's a story of a guy named Nicodemus. And Nicodemus is like, I see something really special in Jesus.

I need to go see him. And so he goes by night so nobody will see him. Knocks on the door, steps into the room, and the candle's lit or the lantern's lit. And he sits down with him. And Jesus says, Well, marvel not, but you must be born again.

[ 28 : 28 ] And the guy looks at him and says, Excuse me? I'm a grown man. You want me to get back in my mother's womb? I don't think that works. And Jesus said, I cannot believe it. You are a teacher, and you don't understand.

I'm not talking about physically getting back in your mother's womb. You must be born again. You must get saved. You must be born again. He got confused. Something spiritual confused him.

Because he could think in terms of physical things, but not in terms of spiritual things. There was a Samaritan woman. Jesus walks up to the well, and he's sitting there, and he said, Hey, lady, give me some water.

And she said, You asked me to give you water. And I'm a woman and a Samaritan, and you asked me. He said, Lady, if you knew who I was, you'd ask me to give you water. And he said, I can give you water that never runs out.

And she said, Where's a well like that? I've never heard of a well like that. I've never heard of water like that. Again, Jesus was talking about spiritual water, not about physical. A woman was like, You mean I don't have to come get water out of the well every day?

[ 29 : 27 ] You mean I don't have running water at the house? That sounds pretty good. But that's what he was talking about. You can easily miss spiritual truth because you're looking at physical things. You remember Jesus tells the crowd, You have to eat my flesh and drink my blood.

And they're all like, What? We're not cannibals. He wasn't really talking about that. He was talking about being fully committed to him. In the Bible, he uses this term, little faith, when they worry about physical needs.

In Matthew 6, verse 30, the Bible says, Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast in the oven, shall he not much more clothe you? O you of little faith, can't you trust God to take care of your physical needs?

And in chapter 8, verse 26, and they were afraid. The boat was about to sink. And he comes and he stops all the storm. And he says, O you of little faith, I stopped the wind. I stopped the storm. You don't trust me when there's danger?

And when Peter was sinking into the water, he said, he grabs Peter and pulls him and says, O you of little faith. So the Christians, the apostles had problems with their faith. So you're here today and you say, you know, I want to believe, but I'm having a problem believing.

[ 30 : 34 ] It's hard to wrap my mind around this. That's kind of why I'd like a sign. I'd like a sign because it's hard to believe. Well, nothing new. It was hard for them to believe. It was hard for them to understand.

And that's the whole point. And so in Matthew chapter 9 or Mark chapter 9, little faith can grow into great faith. In Mark chapter 9 and verse 24, the Bible said, in straightway, the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe.

Help my unbelief. I believe. Help me believe. Help me overcome my unbelief. So I want you to understand this morning. You came and you're having a problem believing God.

And you're like, I just don't know what to do. I'm having a problem. I believe, but I got this unbelief. He said, Lord, help me. Help me overcome my unbelief.

The Bible says in Luke 17, 5, the apostle said unto him, increase our faith. They were believing. They were on the road of faith.

[ 31 : 35 ] They had trusted Christ and they'd taken those first steps. They were born again, but they were having a hard time understanding. They needed to grow in their faith. And you're very likely there.

You're right now thinking to yourself, I believe. I believe, but it's hard to believe. I believe, but there's this unbelief. I believe, but I need more faith. Nothing new.

A little faith is better than no faith. Amen. A little faith is better than no faith. And they had a little faith. And guess how you can get more faith? The Bible even tells you how you can have more faith. The Bible says in Romans 10, 17, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

So as you get into the Bible and as you read the Bible and as you hear the Bible studied and taught and preached and as you study more about the word of God, your faith will grow. And so I want you to understand today.

You don't need a sign. Trust God. You say, I'm trying, but it's hard. Just trust him. Ask him for more faith. Ask him to help your faith grow. Little faith is better than no faith.

[ 32 : 37 ] Trust the Lord. Even the apostles had little faith. So you're sitting there thinking, I just don't know. Sometimes I don't think I believe enough. He said, oh, you have little faith, but they were his apostles. Remember that.

Let me give you the last thing today. The doctrine of the Sadducees, of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In the passage of Scripture, there are two things he says to beware of. He said, I want you to not, he said, beware of looking for signs.

Don't look for signs. And the second thing in verse 11, he said, how is it that you do not understand? I speak it to you concerning the bread, not the bread that you should beware of. Leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Verse 12, I was talking about the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. I was talking to you about the teachings, the practices of the Pharisees.

Leaven is something small, but it had great influence. Jesus was not talking to them about bread, but about what was really important, their doctrine or teaching.

[ 33 : 35 ] Now, they're kind of like, we're over here in Gentile territory, and we didn't bring any leaven, and we can't make more bread, and we certainly can't use this nasty Gentile stuff, and they probably got, well, he's talking to us about that.

That wasn't the point. He was trying to say, you've got to be careful what Bible teaching you believe. You've got to be careful to know what God says and not what religious groups say.

And don't forget the Pharisees and the Sadducees are teaching from a book called the Mishnah. They're teaching books about the book, but not the real book. And that was the problem. This is a warning to beware of the influence in their lives and their way of thinking.

See, the leaven of the Pharisees was like legalism. The Pharisees, they kept score by the rules and the regulations. How much water did you use to wash your hands?

Did you cross that street right? Do you have a rope connecting two houses so you can get to your neighbor's house and it still be considered your house? They had a whole series of rules. They had all these rules that they were keeping, but their heart wasn't right with God.

[ 34 : 36 ] They were phonies. They had external purity, but no internal righteousness. So many of you have seen them walking around. You said, man, they looked like really spiritual people. They walked down the streets.

They prayed on the street corners. They gave money to poor people. They looked really good, but they were fakes. They were fakes. Their legalism was a cover for their deadness and their spiritual uncleanness.

The Bible says in Matthew 23, 27, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like a whited sepulcher, which indeed appears beautiful outward, but inside you're full of dead men's bones.

You can read verse 28 also. Listen, here's what he said. You guys sure look good. You ever been to a graveyard? Well, they make graveyards so pretty, don't they? They make graveyards so pretty.

They put things there. They put ponds. They put trees. They fix everything. They manicure the lawn. They take good care of it. But the truth is, graveyards are where dead bodies are. And he said, that's how the Pharisees are.

[ 35 : 42 ] They got like a niche in the cemetery of the wall full of all the caskets, and they painted it, and they made it real pretty. And on the outside, they look beautiful, but on the inside, they're rotting. That's what legalism does.

You make up a bunch of rules to follow. Christianity is not about following rules. It's about realizing you can't follow rules. It's about realizing you have sinned against the Holy God, and only grace can save you.

And by the way, by the way, the book of Galatians was written to deal with that legalism that crept into the church. So God's not a God of the Pharisees and rules, but he's also not a God of the leaven of the Sadducees was liberalism.

Liberalism. They said there are no miracles, no angels, no resurrection, nothing supernatural. For them, religion is just a means to an end. God writes the book of Colossians to deal with that sect and to explain it better.

So these guys, they were kind of like prosperity gospel kind of people. You know, it's all about what you can get out of God. It's all about how I can improve your life. This is your best life now. That was kind of like their group.

[ 36 : 50 ] And Jesus said, man, you guys got to be real careful about these two groups. You got to be real careful. Don't follow the legalism. Don't follow the liberalism. We got to be careful about doctrine. What people believe affects how they live.

Many talked about loving Jesus and not being so hung up on doctrine. That's impossible. I don't know how many times over the years people come to me and say, preacher, you're just too hung up on doctrine. We just need to love each other.

And everybody ought to just get together. But that's not what the Bible says. And by the way, this doctrine here, we're not talking about petty things like how you dress or how you wear your hair or what kind of entertainment.

We're talking about stuff like Jesus is God. And the only way you can be saved is that God became man and died on a cross so all can be saved. Doctrine is important.

Doctrine is important. So the passage has given you two warnings. Don't seek for signs. Believe God. And be careful about your doctrine. Be careful about who you listen to and follow.

[ 37 : 53 ] Be careful to check all doctrine, all teaching with the word of God. Two traps. Liberalism and following a bunch of rules. And liberalism using God for your purposes.

One is to show how spiritual you are with what you do and don't do. The other is like a prosperity gospel where God is a genie here to serve you. Decide that you will become a servant of God and get into his book and know what's right.

Don't fall into the trap of allowing much external influence without it coming from the word of God. So there's two big warnings in the passage. One, we don't need a sign. God said Jesus came and died on a cross for you to be saved.

You don't need to know anything except this. Can you believe God? Can you believe what God says? And by the way, he gave us his book. He inspired it. He preserved it. He sought to it that we could have his.

A copy of what he said. We got it. So you know what God says. If you believe that, say amen. You know what God said. You know it. By the way, even the guys who act like they don't know, we know it.

[ 38 : 52 ] Everybody knows. Man, we got a copy of what God's word says. We know what God said. We know we got the word of God. So trust God. So you could be saved today. You don't need a sign.

Just trust God. And then as a Christian, know this. You're to be careful not only about seeking signs, but you also got to be careful to know what truth is. You see, you can't go by your feelings.

Too many of us go by our feelings. Well, I just don't feel right to me. I just feel like that would be okay. I didn't. And you're not determining what God says. Stay away from the Pharisees and the rules.

But some of you are staying away from the Pharisees and the rules so much, you've run all the way over to liberalism. Now it's like, I don't matter what I do. That is simply not true. There's a strong balance there. Trust God.

So if you're here today and you've never been saved, you can be saved today. Right there in your seat, why don't you say, God, I know I've sinned against you. I know I deserve to go to hell. But I am trusting you today.

[ 39 : 50 ] For the first time, for real in my heart, I'm believing you and what you're doing across the Calvary. Tell him you believe him. Trust him today and be saved. And if you're a Christian and you've been too hung up on emotionalism, you know why you deal with so much junk?

You're too hung up on emotionalism. You're too hung up on feelings. What you can see and what you can feel instead of what does God say? Trust God.

Trust God. And get it straight that you're going to follow Jesus according to the Bible. Everything we do in our life is ruled by one thing. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for us.

Trust God. Father in heaven, I love you. And I thank you for the chance to serve you. And I pray today that somebody might be saved. Somebody might know that they go to heaven when they die. I pray that today would be the day in their seat or wherever they are that they would trust you.

And I will give you praise. God, do a work. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com) where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.