

Thanks for doing that. For with me. I feel like prayer is just such an important part of what we do and who we are as Christians. And I think that we forget that. And I want to make an invitation or a reminder maybe to you that we would love to pray for you if you are experiencing something difficult or your family is going through a difficult time.

We would love that opportunity to pray for it for you. We have a prayer team that looks at those prayers and takes those prayers and takes it seriously. So if you do have a prayer request, you can go to Horizons, Dot, church, slash, pray, and you will find the prayer forum there on our website. Well, okay, so here's the here's we're into the teaching message now.

So at times I have written my entire sermon on my phone, like just on the little the little keyboard that that that we have on our phones. And that is because of a little tool called autocorrect. Now, autocorrect is a really helpful and useful tool until it's not. Of course, there's a whole website dedicated to autocorrect fails. There are some pretty funny ones on there.

Most of them are inappropriate, so I don't have any examples for you, but they're pretty funny, right? We intend to say something, and autocorrect makes it into something that's. That's not appropriate. Usually, it's to a from a parent to a child or from a child to a parent or grandparent or something. And you can you can imagine what might happen, but we can type things on our phone and we can even use, you know, a word document program we can do we can do that fast and we can do it pretty accurately because of autocorrect.

Now we more often type T-H instead of t h e for the but it doesn't really matter because autocorrect just fixes it for us. Long gone are the days of typing test for job interviews where it really shows how accurate your skills are and I and I think, you know, spelling is no longer quite as necessary.

Right. Because if you're close, autocorrect will just fix it for you. Autocorrect makes assumptions about what we are trying to type, what our message is. That is the program that it makes assumptions for us. And for the most part it can be pretty accurate. Now, as humans, we also make assumptions. We do that, we all do that. We fill in the blanks when people are talking.

We have listen, we interpret, we misinterpret sometimes. Now, in Lincoln, in the residential neighborhoods, there is an assumption that you when you come to an intersection, you will slow down and look for oncoming traffic. In Omaha, in the residential neighborhoods and all the other cities that I have lived in, all the neighborhood intersections have stop signs, right? All of them.

They even have a four way stop or a two way stop. So all you have to do is just look for the sign because if you don't have a sign, you know that the other way has a sign. Now, it was pretty quickly that Tom and I realized that this was different than what we were used to. And now we know, even without the sign, we know to slow down at the intersections.

When. When my son first came to Lincoln, we warned him. We're like, Hey, the neighborhoods don't have stop signs at the intersections, so be careful. And he said something like, That's so weird, right? And it was weird. It is weird. It was odd to us because we were used to something else. We were used to having a sign right there in front of us.

Now, even with the lack of stop signs in the neighborhoods in Lincoln, our world, our city is busy with signs there, you know, on your way home. Just look for the signs. There's construction signs, there's

street name signs. They're advertising signs, store signs all over. Now, I think the world's most advertised store is wall drug in South Dakota.

Now, if you know, you know, if you don't know, there is a road in South Dakota that has a lot of signs. There's probably like 1 trillion signs for a wall drug on that road. Now, I mean, I see the signs. My family, we've been on that road and we see the signs and we stop. Right. Because there are a lot of signs for a wall drug.

Now, if you've been on that road and you have seen all of those signs and you yet you have never stopped at while drunk, that's some sort of like superpower that you have. Like how in the world could you just drive by after seeing all of those signs? Now, in the gospel, according to John, John called Jesus His Miracles Signs.

That's how he referred to them. And Jesus in his miracles in his ministry, had these miracles or signs for his disciples in his followers. But when the when the Pharisees and the Sadducees asked Jesus for a sign in the passage that we are going to read from the Gospel according to Matthew, it's not with the best intention.

Now, last week we read about the Pharisee and the sinful woman. And I mentioned last week that the Pharisee might have invited Jesus to his home, his home, in order to set him up. Now, that's definitely a possibility with the other scripture passages that we know, but really that wasn't an assumption on my part. Now, the passage of scripture that we're reading today, it's a little bit more obvious of what the intentions are of the Pharisees.

Now, the first line of our passage today will tell us that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were together. So, Matthew, chapter 16, starting in verse one, and we'll go from 1 to 12, but we'll see. Here's verse one The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Jesus in order to test him. They asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

Now, that's our first sign that something is up because the Pharisees and the Sadducees were opponents. They were enemies, but they had something in common, and that was Jesus. And more and more so, more specifically, they thought that Jesus was a threat. So they came together in order to try and test Jesus. So they said they wanted to see a sign from heaven.

But what they really were looking for is they wanted to see or hear something that they could use against him. They wanted to hear or see something that said they could bring a charge against him. Now we do this right as humans. We do this sometimes we listen to politicians or news anchors or pastors, right? The people that we might not be on the exact same page as.

And we listen to them and we wait for them to say something so we can say, See, I told you so. They don't believe in God or they don't believe in religion or they are anti this or they are for that. We, we try to trap people sometimes when we listen. Now, Jesus responds to this request to see a sign with this.

So Jesus replies at evening you say it will be nice weather because the sky is bright red and in the morning you say there will be bad weather today because the sky is cloudy. You know how to make sense of the skies appearance, but you are unable to recognize the signs that point to what the time is. An evil and unfaithful generation searches for a sign, but it won't receive any sign except Jonah's sign.

Then he left them and went away. Now Jesus uses somewhat of a cryptic message here, and he's basically saying, Eh, I'm not going to show you a sign. B He says, like, I, God, I'm standing right here in front of you like the sign. And see, he says, you know, he references Jonah, who has a lot of similarities with Jesus in his ministry.

And, you know, think about the three days Jonah spent in the in the big sea creature compared to the three days that Jesus would be in the tomb before his resurrection. So he didn't perform a sign for him in that moment, at least he didn't perform the kind of sign that they were looking for. So that scene closes, that wraps up in and Jesus moves on and there is a new scene.

So starting again at verse five, when the disciples arrived at the other side of the lake, they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus said to them, Watch out and be on your guard for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They discussed this among themselves and said, We didn't bring any bread. Now let's think about that. I really, really wish that I knew what the disciples were discussing.

They obviously focused on that word yeast, rather than being on your guard and Pharisees and Sadducees. They focused on the word yeast. Now the disciples, all Jews would have known about yeast during Passover, which is the greatest one of the greatest festivals, Jewish festivals. All of the leaven or yeast would be removed from the home, and this would be this would allow them to remember the time when the children of Israel left Egypt in such a hurry that they didn't have time for the leaven to rise.

So in the wilderness, when they spent that time in the wilderness, they ate unleavened bread. And then every year at the Passover celebration, they would also they still do, right? They eat unleavened bread as a reminder. So maybe that's what they were talking about in their conversation. I don't know. But whatever it is that they discussed, they decided to say to Jesus, we didn't bring any bread.

Now, now I wonder what Jesus was thinking in this moment. Now, in a moment, we're going to read what his words were. But I wonder what was going on in Jesus's head when he talks about being on guard from the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And they just replied with, we didn't bring any bread. Now I know what would be going on in my head if I was in Jesus's situation.

Right. I'm kind of sarcastic a little bit. And so I can run that through my head and think about what what I might say or what I might think. Now, I want you to remember back the comedy routine, Bill Engvall and Jeff Foxworthy's. Here's your sign. Right. Is basically, you know, if stupid people were signs, it would be easier.

Right. And they have all these examples. So true story. I was officiating a wedding one time and I was I was at the front of the church and I had my robe on. I had my book rights. I had my robe on. I had my book. The groom was standing right here. We were down there and the groom was standing there beside me.

So robe on, book groom standing there were the bride is just about ready to come down the aisle. The groom's father sitting in the front row. And he says to me, Are you the pastor's wife?

Now, what I wanted to say was, yes, I'm just standing here with my husband's robe on holding his book and just holding his place until he gets back from the bathroom. Here's your sign. Right. That's what I

wanted to say. Of course, I didn't say that. And we had joked too early before the ceremony started about the Hawkeyes and the Huskers or whatever.

So I said something about that and we laughed. And it was it was all fine. Right now, I don't think that Jesus probably had something like this go through his head, right? I don't think that he thought his disciples were stupid, but they were clearly not hearing the message or seeing the signs that were right in front of them.

So finishing up this passage, starting again at verse eight. So Jesus replies, Jesus knew what they were discussing and said, You people of weak faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you don't have any bread? Don't you understand yet? Don't you remember the five loaves that fed the 5000 and how many baskets of leftover you gathered and the seven loaves that fed the 4000?

And how many large baskets of leftovers you gathered? Don't you know that I wasn't talking about bread, but be on your guard for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This is my favorite part. Then they understood that he wasn't telling them to be on their guard for yeast used in making bread. No, he was telling them to watch out for the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Now, you've probably been in a conversation before where you're talking about one topic and you're in your head about that topic or something, and ad the whole group switches to another topic, but you're still on the last topic, and then you're like, Wait, we're talking about bread, right? And everyone's like, No, we've moved on from that. Jesus used parables and examples and performed signs, and I don't think that that he was trying to trick his followers in any way, but I think it did take them time to understand what Jesus was trying to teach them.

And Jesus reminds them and Jesus reminds us that it's time for us to return to the main thing. The thing that matters. Now, a big idea in this passage is that Jesus tells us that there are some people that we shouldn't listen to. There are there are false prophets in this world. There are Christian news sources. There are other Christians who claim to be followers of Christ and say one thing, but maybe do another thing.

There are there are Christians who say hurtful and harmful things. And we have to decide as followers of Christ, like, what? What are we going to believe and what are we not going to believe? What are we going to who are we going to listen to and who are we not going to listen to? And we have to read and reread the stories of Jesus, the story of Jesus to better understand the message of Jesus, because Jesus is the sign.

Now we are in this sermon series about relationship, relationships and communication and so even in our relationships, even in our intimate, close relationships, there are some people who try to lead us astray, away from God. And we must surround ourselves with people who build us up and push us closer to God rather than farther away. Now, the most important relationship we will ever have is with Jesus in all relationships will strengthen when we strengthen our relationship with Jesus, when we truly understand what Jesus is trying to tell us.

Now, we in the last few weeks, we've learned that in our relationships, in our communications, that we should we should listen, right? We should speak encouraging words. That's important. We should we shouldn't judge, but rather we should view others the way that God views people. But there is this cycle

that we get caught in sometimes, and sometimes we can really beat ourselves up with what should I do and what should I do?

And especially if we have that type of temperament that we long to be to be good. Now, this sometimes happens in an abusive relationship, but this can happen in all sorts of relationships. We know Jesus tells us to love our enemies, right? We're supposed to love our enemies. So sometimes we stay in relationships and we try to either try to fix the person that we are with or we stay because it makes us feel better about loving the person despite maybe some harm that they are causing.

But part of growing up, both just in life in general and growing up in our relationship, is recognizing the signs some of our life groups are doing that study called I said this and you heard that. It's a great study. If you want to join in, you can still do that. But part of the reason why this study is so important is because it's we need to recognize where people are coming from.

Sometimes we misinterpret because of different personalities and sometimes there are signs in our relationships that are just simply red flags. Now, Jesus was saying to his followers that there are relationships worth investing in and relationships worth letting go of. Now, as I was thinking about the ending of this this sermon and how to wrap this up and how we can apply this and what is what is the point of this passage?

There's kind of two things. First of all, Jesus is saying, you know, don't let the teaching of the Pharisee and the Sadducees. Right. Get in the way of the point. And there are people that are in our world today that are similar to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We don't really learn about them in this passage, but the Pharisees and Sadducees were sometimes hypocritical.

They were sometimes harmful in in their words. They were sometimes unaccepting of others. And the second thing is, is that Jesus by his words and by his actions gives us the example for our relationships. He taught us and showed us love and acceptance. And he was concerned with the poor. He was concerned with the oppressed. Now, anyone who is teaching hate or intolerance or harm is not speaking the message of Jesus.

And if we listen to those kind of messages, the relationships with our family and friends and neighbors and strangers will suffer because again, the most important relationship we will ever have is a relationship with Jesus. And when we listen to that conversation, when we when we hear the conversation that happened between Jesus and his disciples, and when we read the stories of Jesus healing and sitting with the sinners and eating with people the outcast, when we would then we will discover that.

That we will discover someone who forgives our sins. When we when we when we search for that relationship with Jesus, we will we will discover someone who loves us, even when we mess up. When we have this relationship with Jesus, we will find someone who gives us examples of love and justice. These are the things that will have us help us have the best relationships with our loved ones, with our neighbors, with strangers, with those that we are telling about Jesus, would you pray with me?

Gracious and holy God, we know that you long for us to have a relationship with you. But in this message that you shared with your disciples, you said that you told them to watch out. And it is true that in our world it is noisy. There are so many different opinions and information being thrown out at

us, but we have to come back to the main thing and the main thing is to understand Jesus's love for us and understand Jesus and sacrifice for us.

And when we do that, when we build the relationship with, with, with you, Jesus, we will we will understand better those that we should listen to and those that we should not guide. You have big things. You have this this hope for this world, this promise for this world that your kingdom will be here on Earth and we are able to be a part of that.

And the first step is having a relationship with you so that we say all of this. We ask you to help us, to guide us to listen to those that we are supposed to listen to and to turn away from those who are teaching false things. God, we say this in Jesus name. Amen.