

# Show Some Signs

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Bible passage: **Jeremiah 29:11-12** (*The Message*)  
"I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out - plans to take care of you, not abandon you, but plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen."

Millions have seen them; they are every where as we drive down the road. They are as plain as day. I am not sure who the source is, but they are certainly there. Maybe you have seen them too! You know those signs from God on the highway; with messages on a pitch-black background and white letters. I saw one just the other day that read:

"We need to talk."

-- God

After reading that sign, I begin to wonder: Wouldn't it be nice, if when we were ever confused about something, all we would have to do is look at a billboard and find the answer. Or, look up into the sky and there would be something written in the clouds? And, what about the radio? That would be great! We could just tune in and God's voice would break in for each of us and say, "This is what I want you to do in life." I suspect many of you, like me, want God to "show some signs."

Well, let's explore this subject together; because maybe there are some of us who could be weighed down with regret or confusion. Many may have lost our way, and can't seem to find the right path. So it is my suspicion that we all want to hear from God in such a clear way. Then again, depending upon the message and the fear of what we might hear, we may not! However, most people I speak with yearn to hear God's voice; they want God to "show some signs."

Some of you may have heard the story about the middle-aged farmer. He wondered if God really wanted him to be a great evangelist, so he asked God to "show some signs." One day working in the fields, he took a break and laid down under a tree. Looking up into the sky he saw the clouds form what seemed to be the letters **P** and **C**. So, he hopped up, sold his farm, and went out to **P-reach C-hrist**; just knowing that this was God's will for his life.

The only trouble was, this guy was a terrible preacher. One night at one of his crusades after a horrible, horrible sermon, a compassionate friend went forward

and whispered in his ear; "Could it be that God's will for your life was to **P-lant C-orn**?"

Just like the farmer, some of us too get confused, when God "shows us some signs." A lot of times, we get so worked up into a tizzy over what we think God specifically want for our lives. For instance, let's take a look at these three matters:

1. Some of us seem to think that **God has a specific will for almost everything we might ever do** – whether we should go to the mall, or which route we should take to work.
2. Many are more inclined to think that **God has a specific will to be considered in more important decisions**; like who to marry, which job to take, whether or not to buy a house, or what specific ministry we should do.
3. Others feel that **God really doesn't have any specific will at all**, other than we are free, on our own, to do whatever we want.

What is this saying to us? Which of these viewpoints often reflects reality? They can't all be right. If either of the first two is correct, how exactly do you figure out what God's will is in these matters? And if the third viewpoint is true, then we need not pray for guidance about anything, because God isn't going to give it. No doubt, many of us live our lives unsure what God wants. Until we reach a point in our lives, wishing it was different.

I'm reminded of a story of an 85-year-old woman, who was looking back on her life, wishing it had been different. In her words, it is evident that she longed to know God's will for her life, but never felt too clear. She wrote, in a note titled "*If I Had My Life To Live Over Again.*"

Listen to the note in her own words: "I'd like to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I've been this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans."

She continues by saying, that she would have more actual troubles, but have fewer imaginary ones. She said I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. She stated that

she had her moments, but if she had to do it over again, she would have more of them.

She concludes with this: "I've been one of those persons who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat and a parachute. If I had to do it over again, I would travel much lighter." In fact, I would live my life the way I want it to end."

Well, according to Stephen Covey, we don't have to wait until age 85, or when our life ends. In fact, we could start today. In his book, *The 7 Habits of Successful People*, he offers an interesting concept.

Covey's concept is illustrated by a visualization exercise. First he suggests that we imagine, at the end of our life, we were able to listen in to what was being said at our funeral. In other words, what would we like to hear people say about us, as a mother or a father, a life partner, or a colleague? Then, whatever it is we would like to hear, we are now in a position to start living the kind of life that will make it happen.

I am convinced that God's will for our lives is faint, yet clear. And that God is in control of our lives all the time. God is always around us and beside us, listening. And that's what our Bible passage is trying to tell us this morning; it reads,

"I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out - plans to take care of you, not abandon you, but plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen."

God wants nothing more than the best for us. However, we must abandon our self-sufficiency; and trust God. God wants to take ordinary people, like you and me, and use us to help others in extraordinary ways.

And I know there are some of us saying, "God can't use me to help someone else. I'm not in God's will; I made a mistake in my life ten years ago:

- I made the wrong choice.
- I went into the wrong career.
- I married the wrong person.

So for the rest of my life, I have to settle for second best." That's not true at all! Just because we've made some bad choices in the past, doesn't mean we are doomed to being off course and out of God's will for the rest of our lives. God is simply asking us to enter into something called high trust.

The other night I was watching a documentary on television, which showed blind skiers being trained for snow skiing. That sounds impossible, doesn't it?

Paired with sighted skiers, the blind skiers were taught how to make right and left turns. When that was mastered, they were taken to the slope, where their sighted partners skied beside them, shouting, "Left" and "Right!" As they obeyed the commands, they were able to negotiate the course, and cross the finish lines, depending solely on the sighted skiers' word. It was either complete trust or catastrophe.

What a vivid picture of high trust; and an example of how God's will works. In this world, we are, in reality, blind about what course to take. We must rely solely on God -- who is truly the sighted One. And if we walk by faith, God will hold our hand. Even when we can't see the future, hold on and never, ever give up.

There is a quote that says: "*Faith is not believing that God can. It is knowing that God will.*" So go ahead and step out into your destiny; embrace mistakes, bad decisions and failures. And know that God's unfailing grace covers all that we do. It's our blind faith that we find deep down within our souls; and God's unconditional love. How blind is your faith?

#### Closing:

There is a quote that says: "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

As we leave here this morning, I certainly hope a pray that we learn to "walk by faith and not by sight." Have a good Sunday, and go in peace.

Amen.