

Signs on the Road
 Sermon by David Reed
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Last week Rodolfo, in a very warm way, reminded us to “Keep Our Eyes on the Road”.

As we do that we might encounter some strange sights...
 (6 slides of funny signs)

He shared a passage that after 3400 years still applies directly to our lives everyday:

Joshua 1:8-9 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

God was teaching Joshua and Israel to follow God’s rules for the road and keep a positive attitude.

About 1500 years later Jesus came along and said (slide of text)

“I am the way the Truth and the Life, No one comes to the father except through me.:
 John 14:6

The Good News is that finding the way, the truth and the life; the road that Jesus made, has NEVER been more accessible and more clearly marked than it is right now

(Slide)

■ We understand as believers that in this life - **Jesus Is The road**

- He made it and it leads to one place and one place only...his Father (John 14:6)
- He has traveled the whole thing before us and knows every twist, turn, hill, and pothole (Hebrews 4:14-16)

- He made the rules for staying on his road

- To keep us alive
- Get us to where we are supposed to go
- Make it a generally joyful experience

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
 (NIV Version)

"Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life - to God! - is vigorous and requires total attention. (The message Version)

All of us were at one point moving through life when we realized the road of life was heading to an empty and very literal dead – end. And the stakes are pretty high (Cartoon). It is about then that there appears a sign that says next exit - LIFE! A sign hard to find yet without question we have taken that exit.

Now lets be clear...we decided to leave the old road, the old life behind...we got off that road for the new way and the old way is no longer ours. This new way of truth and life in Jesus is harder in many ways – it's narrower. It's much more defined and there are signs that govern the journeys of those who travel it. These new signs are strange and different because this road is completely different from the one before. Right away we begin to understand that this is not MY road. I don't decide where it leads. I don't decide who else can come along. I don't decide what the rules of this road are. It is the journey God has planned for me and for you. Though unique to every traveler the signs that govern our journey are exactly the same. The only thing I can do is choose to follow it...or not. If I do, I have also decided to accept the signs that govern it.

O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing. Jeremiah 10:23-24

When we try to make it on our own road, we get lost! (Directions cartoon)

We also soon begin to see that every sign on this narrow road of Jesus has an opposite sign on the wide road. Have you ever noticed that?

Lets look at some of the signs that govern our journeys on Jesus' road...Were just going to take in a few but I believe they are some of the signs of God we've been seeing lately...We're going to consider Stop. Yield, Merge, and Obey the Signs.

STOP (Slide of sign)

The first and most common sign we encounter is a STOP Sign...

Job 37:14 STOP and consider God's wonders

John 20:27 STOP doubting and believe

John 5:14 STOP sinning or something worse may happen to you...like the eternal consequences of sin. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus

Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23). When we blow through this stop sign we are headed for an inevitable crash.

There is a lot of resistance to stopping. We like to think we've got it figured out and are quite capable of deciding our own way and we are not naturally given to change. I think of when God stopped Saul in his tracks, blinding him with a brilliant light in order to get his full attention and heart. Next time you see a STOP sign – may I suggest you stop and consider the wonders of God in your life, allow God's truth to be the answer for your doubts, and stop whatever sin is damaging your road.

(Stop Sign cartoon - commitment)

There's another STOP sign God has placed on the road. It seems to me that this one has popped up a few times in our fellowship recently. It comes to us through Paul in Romans 14:13 and says, "Stop passing judgment on each other, instead make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brothers way".

YIELD (slide of Sign)

The yield sign has to do with giving right of way. There are times we have to stop in order to yield and there are time it is not necessary. There are two main areas we yield-

Joshua 24:23-24 "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

We give way to God to whom we surrender our wills and hearts. Anything we put ahead of God becomes an idol to God. In doing so we merge into his road in every aspect of our lives...family, marriages, relationships, sexuality, finances, plans, attitudes, priorities...nothing comes before God in importance or priority. If you are holding back on God, not yielding, it will be evident.

The second area of yielding is with each other. I think we've been seeing a few of these of late. Ephesians 5:21 tells us to submit one to another out of reverence for Christ. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. The second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. Everything hangs on these two commandments (Matthew 22:37-39). Be it neighbors or our brothers and sisters – we are called to yield the right of way to the other. What do you think is the most common reason for failing to yield? Being inconsiderate? Proudful? Self centeredness?

So really these are tied together. 1 John 4 tells us that it is not possible say we love God and hate our brother...and Philippians 2:1-8 instructs

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--

On His road we yield our hearts and lives to God and each other. Next time you see one of these signs think of how you might need to yield some part of your life to God and/or a brother or sister

MERGE

Merging comes after yielding. As we merge we move into without disrupting or causing a significant change in the traffic – what God is doing all around us and in others. This is what Jesus meant in his final prayer for the disciples...and for us too by the way. It is found in John 17. We find what is on Jesus' heart for his followers – those traveling on his road Verses 20-23 -

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Have you ever see a sign that said - OBEY THE SIGNS (Slide)

I could not find a picture of one! It is more or less implicit in the signs themselves. They are there to govern the road for the good of those traveling. It is no less with God's governing ways we find in scripture and in our journeys. It is safe to say that God does not take kindly to disobedience and because God is perfectly holy he can not ignore it (Cartoon with judge). There are no excuses that will work with God. What we find true over and over again is that God's ways are good. God has never been wrong.

Let's stop and consider this wonder From God...Psalm 19 The Message version...

God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon. Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening. Their words aren't heard, their voices aren't recorded, But their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere (declaring God's glory).

God makes a huge dome for the sun—a superdome! The morning sun's a new husband leaping from his honeymoon bed, The daybreaking sun an athlete racing to the tape. That's how God's Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, Melting ice, scorching deserts, warming hearts to faith.

The revelation of GOD is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of GOD are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of GOD are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of GOD are plain and easy on the eyes. GOD's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of GOD are accurate down to the nth degree.

God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries. There's more: God's Word warns us of danger and directs us to hidden treasure. Otherwise how will we find our way? Or know when we play the fool? Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh! Keep me from stupid sins, from thinking I can take over your work; Then I can start this day sun-washed, scrubbed clean of the grime of sin.

These are the words in my mouth; these are what I chew on and pray. Accept them when I place them on the morning altar, O God, my Altar-Rock, God, Priest-of-My-Altar.

This is His road we are traveling every day. His road, and there's no turning back for us! (no U-Turn sign) He has paid the greatest toll we can ask or imagine so we could find that exit unto life. He paid our toll with the life of his son.

The glorious sights we see as we go are his glory. For He has perfectly placed where we need to stop to consider His wonders and believe, to stop a sin from destroying our journey with God and one another. It's a journey where we yield our heart and lives to our Father and merge into one with Him - all together in obedience.

Stop, Yield, Merge, obey the signs! It's His road. What do you think we'll see today...