

I don't know about you, but I'm often humored by signs – especially church signs. And as a pastor, I often get emails from church members regarding church signs.

- Don't let worry kill you – let the church help!
- God expects spiritual fruit not religious nuts
- Knock knock? Who's there? Jesus. Jesus who? Exactly
- Do you know what hell is? Come hear our preacher!

Truth is we have a sign for nearly everything – signs to clarify, signs for directions – signs, signs, signs... I find it interesting that a recent sociology study found that most signs are ignored. Speed limit signs, no parking signs, and stop signs – and sadly, handicap signs. But there's one sign that's almost always noticed/followed – *Out of Order*.

Let's be honest. None of us like to see an *Out of Order* sign. It's frustrating to be thirsty and find the drink machine is out of order. Even more frustrating is to be on a trip in need of a restroom and find it out of order.

But what about when life is out of order. Truth is *we expect life to function in order* – and when we do the right things, we expect right results. Yet sometimes we can do *everything* right and things to turn out *every-way* wrong.

Have you ever felt like an area in your life was out of order? Have you ever felt like someone hung an *Out of Order* sign around your marriage, parenting, career, or health?

- **Husband/Wife** – have you tried to do everything right yet your spouse still walked out
- **Parent** – did you raised your kids to know Jesus and do right yet they've still made poor choices
- **Work** – have you worked at being a good employee only to get fired/laid off?
- **Health** – did you eat right, exercise, and follow your doctor's orders yet you still received a difficult diagnosis?

You might not realize it, but how we respond to those moments when life gives us lemons or throws us a curveball or for a loop – MATTER. Do we radiate Christ or repudiate His name. Do we glow for God or groan our issues?

We've been in a series in 1st Peter entitled **GLOW**. When something glows it emits a steady radiance of light. In this epistle, Peter calls on Christians to emit the steady radiance of Christ in them into the world around them by calling us to a life submitted to Christ.

In **1 Peter 3:13-17** – Peter offers (4) guiding principles to help us get our lives into working order should we ever find our lives out of order or out of sync.

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this w/ gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1 Pt. 3:13-17

I RECOUNT Your Blessings

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed... it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

blessed – sometimes translated happiness or joy actually is more about privileged/honored. A blessing isn't so much something you earn/obtain as it is something given to you.

I think sometimes when life gets tough and the moment steals our focus – and we get tunnel vision and into *survival mode*. The result is we lose perspective. We forget how good our lives are (have been) and suddenly our faith becomes brittle in the moment.

Peter charges us to **recount** our blessings (count them 1 x 1) – which is to repeatedly remember all the good things that have happened in our lives. It means to return over/over to the source of our blessings remembering that God is present and working in our lives for our good and His glory.

James said – *consider all joy when you encounter various trials and suffering* b/c you know that God is at work in and around you for His good purposes. He is allowing challenges to deepen/strengthen you for His good purposes.

So instead of zooming into our problems, Peter reminds us to zoom out to our God. So should life throw you for a loop, zoom out to see the bigger picture instead of fixating on the problem. You just might see God's will at work.

II REJECT All Fear

“Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

It's a human tendency for us to *fear the worst* when we cross paths w/ bad news and difficult circumstances. And the enemy loves nothing more than to take our fears and use them to tie us up to bring destruction into our lives.

But we have to reject such notions. We have to remember *whose* we are, *who* is in control – and *what* He's invested into our lives for His will to be fulfilled in/thru us.

2 Timothy 1:7 tells us – *God has not given us a spirit of fear...* but in salvation and in the investment of the H.S. into us – *He's given us a spirit of power, love, and discipline.*

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow.

They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:25-34

What does this mean? We have no need for fear b/c God is on His throne and is working our good and His glory.

I'm reminded of the shipwrecked survivor who washed up on a deserted island. Daily he cried out to God to be rescued but no one ever came. Finally, the man collected materials to build a hut for shelter – yet he never ceased asking God to rescue him. One day, after searching for food he returned to find his hut on fire. In that instant, he fell to the ground crying out, “Why God? Why did you allow this to happen?” The next day, he awoke to a ship anchored off his island. As he was rescued, he asked the crew, “How did you find me?” They said, “We saw your smoke signal yesterday.”

What he thought was the worst that could happen turned out to the best thing that could've happened – **don't fear.**

III REST in Your Relationship w/ God

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Here's the **main** thing. When life turns south and appears to be out of order – make certain Jesus is right where He's supposed to be – sitting on the throne of your life. (*Stool*)

Can I speak to the obvious? The biggest reason we find ourselves in unenviable places we do is b/c we've allowed things on the throne of our lives other than Jesus to be god.

sanctify (*hagiasate*) to set apart/consecrate. It is to cherish or value something so much you set it aside b/c it is special.

In this case, Peter reminds us that the most important thing we must cherish and set in the place of esteem is Jesus. He must be first/preeminent in our lives. He can't get the least and leftovers – we must cherish Him above all.

Sanctify is a term of worship. It means to give the focus of your life and adoration to God. It means to give Christ 1st place. It means to make Christ the SOLE object of your love, reverence, affection, and loyalty.

It means we turn everything over to Him, and live only to please Him and glorify Him. It means we fear displeasing Him rather than fear what men might say about us as His disciples or what they might do to us. *Unknown*

IV READILY Share Your Hope

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have.

HOPE – Hope is an amazing gift. It's both something we are to cherish and share. A few weeks ago, I shared that hope is **Having Only Positive Expectations. **EXPLAIN****

Hope is more than a dream. As I've shared before – I dream of one day playing golf at Augusta National – but that's a pipe dream w/ no promise – so it's not hope.

hope is having *positive anticipation* of experiencing what has been **promised**. So while no one has ever promised to take me to play Augusta National, Jesus has promised me that if I'll follow Him that I'll experience a God-directed, fulfilled life on earth and eternal life in heaven.

This is a reality worth sharing. To be prepared to share our hope in God we must have set Him apart as our Lord/Savior – then we'll be able to give an apology for the hope we have.

always be prepared – refers to one's preparedness to defend what they believe and why they believe it.

answer (*apologia*) to put on a formal defense in a judicial courtroom. This refers to one's ability to offer a satisfactory defense as to why they believe what they believe.

Peter reminds us of a critical truth – **we always talk about who we know and what we love!** (kids/grandkids)

Have your doctrinal views, and all your knowledge of Christ, packed away in a handy form, so that, when people want to know what you believe, you can tell them. If they wish to know why you believe you are saved, have your answer all ready in a few plain, simple sentences; and in the gentlest and most modest spirit make your confession of faith to the praise and glory of God. Who knows but what such good seed will bring forth an abundant harvest? *Spurgeon*