

Too Noisy, Use Hand Signals

Scripture: Matthew 3:1 – 12

Feb. 11th, 2024

Super Bowl Sunday

Today on this Super Bowl Sunday, a safe bet would be that a team with red on its jersey will win. Or a safe bet would be that it will be the most watched show of the year on TV. Who are you cheering for? The 49ers or the Chiefs?

I was amazed this past two weeks how so many people are worked up over Taylor Swift's relationship with Kevin Kelsey. I am not a 'Swiftie' but PLEASE!!!!

Does anybody take anything seriously anymore? Do you take anything serious anymore?

Every day, we are given warnings - check engine light, high voltage signs, no trespassing signs, use only as directed signs, bridge will freeze before road surface signs, and I am sure you can name some other signs we see that warn us.

Warning signs are part of life for all of us. Warning signs are common place and we know this. Even so, do we really take them seriously? Even so, do we pay attention to the warning signs? Do we take warning signs seriously or do we act like my middle son who when he was a little boy and saw a sign on the heater that said - 'Hot to the touch' - so he touched it!

Part of our problem with warning signs is that we think we have figured out how to beat the odds of failure so we ignore the warning signs. We love to try to beat the odds. If a road sign says - '30mph on the curve', we will try it at 40mph or 50mph. If the check engine light goes off, we will still drive the car for some time.

We feel exempted from the warnings because somehow we feel we know better.

During today's Super Bowl there may come a time when the crowd gets so noisy that the quarterback may have to use hand signals. Brock Purdy or Patrick Mahomes may have to resort to communicating with his team by using hand signals. If his offensive players do not know the hand signals, the play they are running will not succeed!

Brock and/or Patrick may have to touch their helmet or hold up several figures to identify the play. The crowd will be so noisy, this will be the only way to communicate!

In practicing for today's big game, I am sure each coach has drilled his team on the hand signals they may use in the game. In fact, often the coach will bring in loud speakers during practice so that they have to practice hand signals!

We often think we are smart but we do not know it all! The Super Bowl today may remind us that as much as we may think we know about life, we are not exempted from the warning signs of life. We all must be ready – look for the signals of life and look for the signs of Jesus Christ.

In our scripture reading today we hear of John cries of 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near'. Let us use this Super Bowl Sunday to repent, repent, repent!

Here's what repentance looks like - confess your sins, apologize for wrongs you have done, forgive others for wrongs they have done to you, listen to others in need, assist others in need, restore your faith in Jesus Christ, repay a debt to someone, do justice, and make peace. Boy that is a lot to repent!

This is how we move closer to God and see our lives changed. This is how we move closer to God and broken relationships will be healed. This is how we move closer to God and experience real peace in our community. This is how we move closer to God and experience real peace within our church. This is how we move closer to God and heal our church. Repent, Repent, Repent!

Oh yes, the kingdom of heaven has come near and we will be required to repent.

Growing up in the Catholic Church, when I enter the church I would always cross myself. (Demonstrate that)
It was my hand signs that I was about to worship.

In the early church, since Christians were punished for their faith, they had to make a sign in the dirt to let others know that they were a Christian. Do you know this sign?

(Draw half of the Jesus Fish sign)

Can anyone come forward and complete this sign that you are Christian also?

The sign is called the 'Jesus Fish'. Someone would make half the sign of the Jesus Fish and the other person would make the other half of the Jesus Fish. By this, they would know each of them were Christians.

Church has always used hand signals to show our faith.

May we show our faith by putting our hands together like this and pray. Let us do this together – put your hands together and let us pray:

Dear God, we get lost at times. We get lost running around in this world. The noise of this world often drowns out your voice. May we always put our hands together and pray to you for your mercy.

Let us remember to look for your warning signs. We pray this in Jesus' name. AMEN.