

Yield!

4 of 7 "Signs for the Summer" Rev. Michael J. Mattil

I heard it said of a certain preacher, "After his sermons, the people are enlightened, informed, inspired ... **and many of them are well rested**, too!" I hope that statement will be partially true for you today!

I am in the middle of a series I have called "Signs for the Summer." Jesus said His followers should take notice of the signs around them. I am encouraging you to do the same. I am using common road signs as visual reminders of how we should live as the followers of Jesus Christ. So far we have looked at

- Stop, reminding us to be aware of our surroundings and proceed with caution
- Detour/Construction – reminding us that life may not always go as we have planned, but Jesus will be with us every step of the way
- Slow – this is a reminder that in our busy lives we need to be sure to take time to speak with and listen to God

And today's sign is **Yield**. What does it mean to yield? The dictionary definition is this: "to give up or submit, as to a superior power or authority; to give up or surrender as to the enemy; to give up or relinquish, as to ones' place in line; to give as due or required, as to obedience." As far as the traffic sign is concerned, it means to give way to the other driver – if you have the yield sign, the other driver has the right of way. At least that is how it should work. If you are traveling south on 75 and try to exit at 82, you know that the yield sign doesn't mean a thing there! And there are other places where a yield sign doesn't seem to mean anything. Perhaps we should follow the lead of Great Britain. I'm told that they do not have yield signs, but rather put it more bluntly: **Give Way!**

I think the problem is deeper than just ignoring or not understanding the signs. Yielding, submitting, goes against our nature. It is an ego buster, it goes against our mindset. We tell ourselves that we will not give in to anyone else. The irony here is that when you refuse to yield, you have already yielded. When you refuse to yield, you have given in to the devil. He tells you that you should not let anyone tell you what to do, but in doing so he is telling you what to do. Too often you yield, you give in to, temptation. Not exactly the way God wants you to live!

That is why it is necessary for us to yield our will to God. Our perfect example of this is Jesus. This was true throughout His life here on earth, but perhaps it is seen most clearly in the **Garden of Gethsemane**. You remember the scene. Jesus was about to be betrayed. He had gone there to pray for strength. He was agonizing over all that was about to happen. He was feeling the weight of the whole world's sins and would soon carry them to the cross to make payment for them all. He would endure eternal damnation for all people. In this context, when every fiber of His being must have been telling Him to run away, Jesus said,

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

This prayer of Jesus gives us a perfect picture of submission and surrender to the Father's will. Jesus **YIELDED** to His Father's will. We can never understand what Jesus was going through in the Garden, but we can relate to a dread of the future. We fret about:

- unpaid bills
- a loved one's death
- a terminal disease or disability or facing surgery
- a family crisis

The words **“Thy will be done”** may come out of your mouth, but it is difficult to keep that sentiment in your heart. You say “Thy will be done” but continue to fret and worry. You resist yielding our will to God's. It is only when you are led by the Spirit of God that you will truly yield to God's will and place your life and future into the loving hands of your Heavenly Father. And when you have thus YIELDED your will to God's, you will experience a peace in your life - nerves are calmed, worry is repressed and your life will be comforted.

Let's consider another example of Yielding from Scripture. **Peter** said that He would YIELD to the Father, that He would never deny Jesus, and I am sure he meant it when he said it. But he was not the pillar of strength he thought himself to be, and Jesus knew that. Peter said he was willing to die for Christ, but he was wrong about this. He was trying to do it on His own, and You and I make the same mistake about ourselves. We often don't see our own most serious shortcomings. When temptations come, we too often yield to them!

Jesus told the disciples, just before His crucifixion, that they should pray that they might not enter into temptation. I think He meant that they should pray that they might **not yield to**

temptation. I think this is why He taught us to pray, "**lead us not into temptation.**" He was not telling us to pray that we never encounter temptation. Rather, He wanted us to pray that we not succumb to temptation when faced with it, that we would not give in to it.. When you pray "**deliver us from evil,**" or, "deliver us from the evil one," you are asking God to keep you from yielding to Satan, to help you avoid yielding to temptation. Your enemy, the devil, cannot harm you if you do not yield to temptation. If you would use the power God gives you to resist temptation, the devil would have absolutely no power over you. This is why it is so important for you to pray to the Father that you not yield to temptation.

God doesn't want your lives to be difficult. That's why He doesn't want you to yield to temptation. The Devil tries to turn this around and make you think that God wants your life to be difficult. Don't believe it. You can be sure that it is the Devil who wants your life to be difficult. And he will do all that he can to bring that about.

One more Scriptural example of YIELDING for you to consider: **Mary**, the mother of our Lord. Mary is an example of how God acts through ordinary human beings like you and me, ordinary human beings that YIELD themselves to His will. When God announced through Gabriel that Mary would be the mother of our Lord, she was understandably overwhelmed. But as she listened and understood, she yielded to God's Word saying:

"I am the Lord's servant... May it be to me as you have said." Luke 1:38

Like Mary, you may at times be perplexed and fearful. You don't want God to change the direction of your life. And as for Mary, God's plan will come to fruition only if you are willing—if we can find the courage to surrender to God's will!

Consider just how important this was, what was riding on the faith of a young peasant woman! She overcomes her fear, and surrenders her assured future as the wife of a carpenter name Joseph to begin a life that is far beyond her imagination—a life as mother of the Savior.

The word of God addressed to Mary through Gabriel is the same word God addresses to us: "**Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.**" You have received God's favor through the fruit of Mary's womb, born in a lowly stable, crucified on a terrible cross, resurrected on the third day, living and reigning for all eternity. And God invites you to YIELD your life to Him and His

will as Mary did, saying "Let it be to me according to your word." It should be your prayer that God would grant you the grace this to yield yourself to Him in this way.

Let me share an example of this that came to me in an email this week. You may recall that in June I baptized two little boys, Christian and Eamon Wingart. Their mom, Jennifer, grew up in this congregation. As she was going through confirmation classes, she lost her hearing. She lived without hearing for about 10 years, then had cochlear implants that restored her ability to hear. It was amazing to see how her faith sustained her through all of this. She now is married to a naval officer and stationed in Guam. Here is what she wrote:

Eamon was taking a nap and I was sitting at my desk doing bills and reviewing the billet list. Graham (her husband) wanted me to select a couple of places for my top choices so he could turn in a list to his CO regarding where we'd like to go for the next duty station. Christian, my little musician, was sitting on the couch in front of me strumming his little guitar/ukelele. I was fretting and fretting over the billet list and did not have a clue as to where I'd like to be next - Graham has been stressed over this as well. Then I hear this little voice clear as day say "Trust the Lord"...I looked at Christian and his head was peeking over the couch looking back at me. I asked him to repeat as I was not sure that I had heard him correctly, but he says it again "Trust the Lord". I thought to myself - Surely, he can't be saying what I think he is saying?!?!?! So I begin the process of trying to make sure I understand him "Christian, did you say "the door", do I need to check the door"? His response was "No Mommy, Trust the Lord"....and then he starts strumming his guitar. It dawns on me that when he went to VBS at Grace way back in June, he learned a song called "Trust the Lord". I had never heard him singing it before, but I ask "Christian, are you trying to sing "Trust the Lord"? His response was a delighted "Yes!" (and I am sure he was thinking that it was 'bout time she understood me!). He proceeds to start singing and announces he is playing the guitar 'like him' - which I presume is Pastor Mattil as Christian was so enthralled with his guitar playing at VBS. As I watch him sing and play "Trust the Lord", I realized that I got a message and I got it. I just need to trust the Lord and know that he will show us where to go next. Its amazing how He can use a little dude like Christian to send me a message that we definitely needed to hear.

That is a message we all need to hear – **“Trust the Lord!”** Yield, give way to Him, let Him be in control and see how that works out for you. As a reminder of this, I'd like to close this sermon by inviting you to join with me in singing that song mentioned in the email: Trust the Lord. It is based on Psalm 27:14.

**Trust the Lord, trust, trust the Lord
Be strong and take heart, and wait on the Lord
Trust the Lord, trust, trust the Lord.
Sing Alleluia! Sing alleluia! Sing Alleluia! Trust the Lord!**