

Significant Turning Points in Life

Introduction:

1. There are turning points in the history of mankind, and there are turning points in our individual lives.
2. May I say, without any attempt to be dramatic, that the 5th of November could be a major turning point for our nation.
3. Turning back the clock on the history, we can point to several that occurred within the lifetimes of many of us here today:
4. The Twin Towers (2001), President Kennedy shot (1963), Pearl Harbor (1941).
5. I could name a bunch more – the Vietnam War, the Invasion of Iraq, and all the other major catastrophes that you could probably recall.
6. The God we serve has a history of turning crises into turning points.
7. I believe He can do the same for you.
8. You see, the choices that we make at the turning points of life, at the crossroads of life, have an incredible impact not only on who we become but on what our lives amount to and what they accomplish.
9. With that as the backdrop, we will talk about a few turning points.
10. We will look carefully at some of the specific turning points recorded in Scripture to see what we can glean

The Kingdom failing:

1. This is one of the life experiences of the Kingdom of Judah.
2. **Isaiah 6** is the real beginning of the prophetic book.
3. Everything prior is a prologue or overview.
4. It was the year that King Uzziah died.
5. We don't know a whole lot about King Uzziah, but we do know this:
6. He was the king of Judah for a long time—around 50 years.
7. His reign was marked by relative peace and stability.
8. He built up the kingdom, especially the farming towns and the army.
9. By the time he died, his kingdom was in pretty good shape.
10. But when he died, a new superpower was rising in the Middle East—the Kingdom of Assyria.
11. The year that King Uzziah died was a **turning point** because, after this, Judah gradually slid from being a stable, independent kingdom to no kingdom at all.
12. Isaiah's encounter with the Divine is at once wondrous and filled with awe; it's mysterious and dangerous.
13. It took place in the Temple in Jerusalem, the place where God was worshipped.
14. In **chapter 6, Isaiah** is given an overwhelming view of God in the heavenly throne room.
15. The fiery, winged serpents we last encountered in **Numbers 21** are here, covering their feet and their faces, perhaps out of fear of God's devastating majesty.
16. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty.
17. The vision was so immense that the hem of his robe filled the temple.
18. They called back and forth to each other, worshipping and praising
19. God with these words: "**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the**
20. **whole earth is full of his glory.**"

21. Their voices shook the very foundations of the building.
22. The throne room was filled with smoke to cover the holiness of God.
23. We ought to think about this picture in the context of our worship.
24. We need to remember God is present with us every Sunday.
25. Our worship matters to God.
26. Realizing his trouble, Isaiah confesses, ***“Woe is me, I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”***
27. In this moment of divine grace, the fire of the Holy One is not for destruction but for purification.
28. That message he was to deliver was a tough one.
29. And so God commissions Isaiah. ***“Go and say to this people: keep on listening, but do not understand; keep looking, but do not comprehend. The minds of these people are dull, and their ears are stopped, and they have shut their eyes.”*** Then I said, ***“How long, O Lord?”*** And he said: ***“Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people and the land is utterly desolate; until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. Nothing would be left but a stump like a tree.”***
30. The people have been consuming things that violate their covenant with God, and they have been saying things that violate their covenant with each other.
31. Healing is still possible, but it would mean that the community would have to wake up to exactly how bad the problems are.
32. We must understand that God will use imperfect humans as vessels to carry His message.
33. ***A holy seed would remain*** and new life was still possible.
34. Right now, it can be a turning point in our nation, but it must start with us.

Most Significant Turning Point:

1. The most significant turning point in our lives must be accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
2. It may sound as if one day, Jesus shows up, and immediately, we walk away from our old life and leave everything behind.
3. There are as many ways of being called, finding Jesus, being found by Jesus, whatever you want to call it, as there are people. It is unique and personal to each one of us.
4. Our entire life is a conversion.
5. Repeatedly, Jesus comes to us and says, ***“Follow me.”***
6. Throughout Matthew’s gospel, we see that he describes Jesus’ life and ministry as well as the ongoing shaping of Peter, Andrew, James, and John’s lives.
7. Turning points always resound with the invitation to follow Jesus.
8. He only says two things: ***“Repent” and “Follow me.”***
9. The turning points bring us face-to-face with Jesus in many ways.
10. Think about your turning points, times when, for better or worse, your life was turned around:
11. Our lives are a series of turning points, some big, others small.

12. Each turning point comes with the opportunity for and the promise of Christ to refashion our lives.
13. Jesus did that for Peter, Andrew, James, and John. *"I will make you..."*
14. What is the turning point you face today?
15. Regardless, it is there, and so is Jesus, calling, longing, and desiring.
16. He stands there saying, *"Follow me. I've chosen you."*

Always Hope:

1. There is always hope.
2. There is hope because of the most important turning point in human history.
3. That turning point occurred when God sent his Son to earth to take on human form—incarnated, we call it—God made flesh.
4. God does not speak to us in that way most of the time.
5. But God speaks to us in our experiences, in encounters with other people, and through our reading of God's Word—the Bible.
6. Sometimes, God even speaks to us in the silence.
7. If we're willing, we might be the turning point God uses to bring about a change for the good in their life.
8. Let us embody that love—of God's grace—for our neighbors and community.
9. Finally, just for a moment in the final few minutes, let me suggest that each one of us think through some of the significant turning points in our lives and do three things as you think about them:
 - a. Thank the Lord for guiding you in those decisions.
 - b. Ask God to forgive you because that decision you made hurt or wounded someone else.
 - c. Commit that in the future, you will make no major decision without consulting Him.