

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey**

TEXT: **Mark 12:18-27**

TITLE: **The Sin of the Sadducees**

The Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders struck out; the Herodians and Pharisees struck out, up next to bat-
The Sadducees

- Fewer in number than the Pharisees but wealthier and more politically influential (“temple power”)
- Accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament (Pentateuch)
- Did not believe in spirits or demons
- Did not believe in the resurrection (life after death)

Mark 12:18-23 Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and questioned him:

¹⁹ “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that **if a man’s brother dies**, leaving a wife behind but **no child, that man should take the wife and raise up offspring for his brother.**

²⁰ There were seven brothers. The first married a woman, and dying, left no offspring.

²¹ The second also took her, and he died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise.

²² None of the seven left offspring. Last of all, the woman died too.

²³ In the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be, since the seven had married her?”

What they’re referring to is **Deuteronomy 25:5-10**, The Levirate (*Latin for brother-in-law*) marriage commandment

It was meant to protect a family’s inheritance, including the woman’s, in case a man died without heir
The firstborn son would be considered the son of the deceased brother

What they’re implementing is a ‘*Reductio ad absurdum*’ (Latin for "reduction to absurdity" argument)

a form of argument that disproves a proposition by showing that its logical consequences are absurd,
contradictory

They think they have trapped Jesus and are ready to judge *Him*

Any time someone thinks they are in the place to judge Jesus, they would do well to remember,
we will all stand before *His* judgment

Augustine, Confessions book 4 Ch. 12- “O sons of men, how long will you be so slow of heart? Even now after Life itself has come down to you, will you not ascend and live? But where will you climb if you are already on a pinnacle and have set your mouth against the heavens? First come down that you may climb up, climb up to God. For you have fallen by trying to climb against him.”

The Old Testament is clear on the reality of the resurrection/ life after death

Job 19:25-27 But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust.

²⁶ Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh.

²⁷ I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me.

But they only believe the first 5 books are the word of God, so Jesus will show them that even there it speaks of it as
He brings up Exodus 3:6 to them

Mark 12:24-27 Jesus spoke to them, “Isn’t this the reason why you’re mistaken: you don’t know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶ And as for the dead being raised—haven’t you read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God said to him: **I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?** ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You are badly mistaken.”

First let’s address Jesus’ answer to their question and then we’ll cover the greater issue Jesus exposes

Marriage is a gift that is tied to this world which points to a gift unraveled for eternity

Paul provides clarity in **Ephesians 5:31-32** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³² This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Earthly relationships will not endure in the same way in heaven.

The only relationship that will endure and be heightened in experience is that of being a child of God.

That is how we will relate to one another- brothers and sisters in Christ

To be fair, this may be difficult for most people to embrace with gladness (maybe a relief for others?)

Augustine calls this ‘displaced loves’. We are attached to the gifts of God to the point that we are becoming detached from the Giver of those temporal gifts.

I think the issue is we struggle to grasp how fulfilling and culminating a life with God in heaven will be like.

We don’t think high enough of God.

A helpful illustration: a baby in the womb knows their mother, they may be familiar with her voice,
but not until birth do they know the embrace of her touch and kisses & can see her face to face
The life with Jesus that awaits us is far superior to what we are experiencing now!

I want to point out one implication of the brevity of marriage (though there are more if you ponder on it):

- **You only have this short life to love your spouse well** (as your spouse)- stop wasting time
Love & respect & enjoy one another

V25 Jesus mentions we will be *like angels in heaven*

What He is not saying is that we will be angels, but that we will be like them

In splendor and worship and immortality

Resurrection Life is not the continuation of the same thing here but longer

Paul details this in **1 Corinthians 15:42-44** So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; ⁴³ sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; ⁴⁴ sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Jesus does not explain to them in detail what heaven is like. The bible tells us some, but not everything.

Perhaps because we cannot fully grasp the realities of heaven.

How do you describe the color yellow, to a person born blind?

There are many mysteries regarding heaven. One thing we know is true: we won’t be disappointed

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived— God has prepared these things for those who love him.

V26 Jesus proceeds to further show that they don't know as much as they think they do

His argument? "I AM, not I WAS"

Tim Keller- "Notice that Jesus does not hang the hope of life after death (like the Greeks did) on the idea of an immortal part of us. Rather, He rests in the commitment of God to us ('I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'). This is a very powerful argument for life after death. We have a God who cannot, at our death, scrap that which is precious to Him!"

Jesus does address their immediate question, but He also reveals the real issue

He uses a chiastic pattern in answering them, which is important to see His emphasis

>You are mistaken

>You don't know the scriptures

>You don't know the power of God

>The power of God raises the dead

>The scriptures reveal God is Lord of the living

>You are badly mistaken

What is the root issue at hand? They don't know the scriptures and therefore deny the power of God

v24 'mistaken'- *planáo* is the root of the English term, *planet* ("wandering body").

it. to go off course/ wander or roam into error

The sin of the Sadducees is the sin of many in the church today-

to claim to know God while mishandling His Scriptures and denying His power

Christian, could it be that you have little trust in the power of God to help in your current situation because you have little time spent in His Word?

Can YOU deny the power of God???

Jeremiah 32:17 Oh, Lord GOD! You yourself made the heavens and earth by your great power and with your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you!

- We live crushed by shame although Romans 8:1 tells us there is no condemnation for those in Christ
- We panic about the future as if it depends entirely on us, although Matthew 6 tells us not to worry about it
- We claim to be unable to forgive others although Ephesians 4 tells us to forgive as we have been forgiven
- We claim "nothing good can come from this", even though our entire Christian faith hinges on God bringing forth life from a tomb!

The Sadducees were polished but powerless because they did not know the Scripture of God

They teach us that one can be accepted, celebrated and even honored by others, for our religion even, yet be wrong about God

Your mom group, your work buddies, your club members, your friends and neighbors may pat you on the back for being true to yourself- but how about we be true to the God of the Bible!

Two questions worth considering:

When thinking about my present issue-

- **What has God said regarding it in His Scripture?**

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- **What is He able to do in His power about it?**

Zechariah 4:6 So he answered me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by strength or by might, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD of Armies.

The resurrection is both a hope and a warning

At this point in Mark's gospel, Jesus has predicted His resurrection three times

1 Corinthians 15:16-20 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone. ²⁰ But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead...

All of our present and future hope is founded on His resurrection

Yet it is also a warning for those, who like the Sadducees will deny the power of God

RC Sproul- "The doctrine of the resurrection states that the souls of men live on after death, and that when God brings history to a close, He will raise the bodies of all human beings from the grave and reunite them to their souls, with the righteous then being welcomed to eternal life with God and the unrighteous being sent away into eternal torment."

Know God's word; Know God's power; Know God

CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

Do not make the mistake of the Sadducees.

Do not settle for a form of religion that knows the language of God but denies the power of God.

Know His Word. Trust His power. Fix your hope on the risen Christ.

BULPEN-

V24 mistaken- *planáō* – properly, go astray, get off-course; to *deviate* from the correct path (circuit, course), *roaming* into error, *wandering*; (passive) be misled.

[4105 (*planáō*) is the root of the English term, *planet* ("wandering body"). This term nearly always conveys the *sin* of roaming (for an exception – see Heb 11:38).]

There are two kinds of people when they go off course and get lost- those who have realized it and correct course, and those who won't accept they've gone off course

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 2:1 For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.

Romans 4:17-21 As it is written: **I have made you the father of many nations**—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, the one who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist. ¹⁸He believed, hoping against hope, so that he became **the father of many nations** according to what had been spoken: **So will your descendants be.** ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body to be already dead (since he was about a hundred years old) and also the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do.

Exodus 3:6 Then he continued, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

The hope and relationship with God will last even beyond the grave

Do not miss this: because they do not know/ misunderstand the Bible, they do not know God or the power of God!

some people are so absorbed by this life that they never pause to think of what is next

Frederick Buechner- "*Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing*"