

Gospel of Mark Chapter 12C

After many years in full time ministry there is really only one thing that I truly miss from my years in the business world; I miss the daily interaction, the exchange of thoughts and ideologies with non-Christian people in the workplace.

I used to enjoy the challenges that my co-workers would bring to the Word of God. Have you experienced the challenge of conflicting ideas and beliefs where you work?

When you speak authoritatively, from God's Word in our pluralistic society you will most likely be called narrow minded, even foolish. You may face some very passionate opposition:

- In a conversations over politics or ethics, if you express a Biblical view of gender or marriage you will most likely be called a hater or a bigot even when you speak the truth in love. (w/ Gentleness and kindness)

Some people that you work with will attempt to discredit the Word of God, with statements like: *If God is good and loving why are there wars and so much hatred? Where did Cain get his wife? Didn't David have a "Special Love" for Jonathan?*

- I have had people who have never read the Bible passionately argue with me saying it is full of errors and contradictions.
- Materialistic / Scientific intellectualism mocks the Creation narrative in Genesis.
- You may find (*As I have*) there are individuals who strongly oppose the supernatural power of God but fully embrace the legitimacy of U.F.O's.

We should be comforted knowing that the Lord Jesus also faced verbal attacks from unbelievers throughout his life.

- Our recent studies have focused on Tuesday of Passion Week, the day when the Sanhedrin has unleashed a barrage of attacks on the Lord Jesus.
- Last week I compared the Sanhedrin's attacks on Jesus to a boxing competition. (Tag Team) No sooner does one opponent leave the ring but another one leaps in.

This week the attack on the Lord Jesus comes from the Sadducees:

1. The Approach
2. The Absurdity
3. The Answer

Who were the Sadducees? They didn't believe in Jesus that is why they are Sad -u-see. They were the aristocrats, the socially elite, they were the smallest "political party" in Israel but they carried the greatest clout because they controlled the wealth and the activities of the Temple. They were the party of the chief priests.

- They were also the theological liberals of their day.

You might compare them to the “Experts” you will find today on the History channel; the professors, doctors who attempt to explain away the miracles of the Bible.

- You will hear them teaching that the children of Israel walked across something called the Reed Sea rather than the Red Sea. (don’t believe in miracles)
- They seek to explain away the miracles of Jesus using materialistic logic.
- These are the nation’s elite professors of religion from institutions like Princeton or Harvard. They are men with more degrees after their name than a thermometer.
- They are the intellectual elite but in reality they are simply unbelievers.

The Sadducees were materialists. They rejected everything supernatural, they didn’t believe in angels or demons. They rejected the idea of an afterlife, so they refused to believe in an eternal existence in heaven or hell; they even questioned the existence of the immaterial human soul.

- They only believed in that which their logical, mathematical materialistic minds could comprehend.
- In this way you might compare them to Dr Carl Sagan who declared, “The Cosmos is all that there is all that there was and all that there ever will be.”

These Sadducees believed that the only books of the Bible that were inspired by God were the first five books of Moses known as the Pentateuch. (Gen, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut)

They have carefully planned their attack against the Lord Jesus. They are prepared to discredit him and they plan to use the Scripture to do so.

- Didn’t Satan try to use the Scripture when HE tested the Lord Jesus?

2. The Absurdity

Mark 12: 18 **And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying,** 19 **“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.**

- This comes from Deuteronomy 25:5 and is a part of the law that expressed compassion for a widow while securing the inheritance and promises of God within the family.

Back then there was no social security or welfare system, no life insurance to help widows. God in his grace provided this law to make provision for widows.

- It is called the Levirate Law (Levir - Brother - in law)

Deut 25; 5 **“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.”**

- If you have studied through the O.T. you would know that this is one of the key principals in the book of Ruth.
- Boaz a close relative (Levir) married Ruth after her husband died. (*beautiful*)
- A study of Ruth's descendants reveals the importance of this law because King David and yes, even the Lord Jesus himself came from the Levirate union of Ruth and Boaz.
- But the Sadducees hypothetical example takes God's gracious provision to a laughable extreme. Let's look at it:

Mark 12:20 **There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. 21 And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. 22 And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. 23 In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife."**

- If you are the 3rd brother in line would YOU marry her??? (Killer dessert)
- This kind of argument is generally called an argument to absurdity. It attempts to show some basic belief to be untrue because its implications, when followed to an extreme prove to be absurd.
- They are attempting to prove the doctrine of resurrection was wrong by following God's provision of Levirate marriage to an extreme.
 - I can imagine there was at least some winking of the eyes and nudging of elbows going on as the Sadducees posed their question.
- They are proud of themselves for coming up with such an air tight, irrefutable question.
- Not unlike the "Scholars" who, with a snicker in their tone, and humanistic pride in their heart bring their "Scientific Evidence" supporting evolution to bear on us poor, uneducated souls who hold to the antiquated narrative of Creation.

They think they have delivered a knockout blow to Jesus BUT no sooner do they deliver their punch but Jesus responds with a counter punch, a strong uppercut to the glass jaw of their materialistic intellect.

The ANSWER

Mark 12: 24 **Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?"**

- Jesus does not pull any punches, he immediately strikes with a doubled-edged indictment.
- *The reason you are wrong* (KJV - **You err because**) (Young's Lit - **you go astray**)
You are entirely self-deceived on TWO levels:
 - You do not know the Scriptures.
 - You do not know the power of God.

Jesus affirms the resurrection as a concrete FACT based upon the Word of God which is brought about by the power of God.

- He will elaborate on the Power of God first:
- BY His own glorious power God will raise the redeemed to be LIKE the angels.

Mark 12: 25 **For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.**

- Remember the CONTEXT: Jesus is saying: YES there is a resurrection! AND in that resurrection believers will be LIKE the angels in their marital status.
 - Angels are UNMARRIED!

IMPORTANT: Every funeral I do someone says, “**well so and so is an angel now.**”

- NO, people don't become angels! If they believe the Gospel they become glorified human beings.

They are not angels in their marital status is LIKE that of the angels, unmarried.

Married people generally have TWO reactions to that statement.

For those of you who have a GOOD marriage, I want to encourage you that your Believing Spouse will most certainly be with you among the redeemed in Glory.

- I believe that you will love them with a love that is unhindered by unstable emotions or fleshly foolishness because **the former things will pass away.**
- And because you will live eternally there is no need for the procreation that is afforded in the marital union.
- In glory there will be a union, an intimacy, a oneness that exists far beyond the marital union.

For those of you who endure a BAD marriage here on the earth, that phrase, “**Till death do us part,**” is a reality. Death brings an end to the marital covenant.

Luke's record of this same conversation includes an additional statement:

Luke 20: 35 **but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage,** 36 **for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.**

- By the power of God, all of the redeemed will be like the angels, equally spiritual in nature, they will enjoy an eternal existence, worshipping round the throne of God in a glorified body. “Sons of the Resurrection”

1 Corinthians 15: 42 **So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.** 43 **It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.**

It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

- The Apostle Paul affirms AS sure as you now live in a physical body you can be sure that there is an eternal body for all who believe.

Let's consider the Second part of the Error of the Sadducees: **you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?**.

- You do not know the Scriptures.

Certainly these men would have heard the Word of God, as a matter of fact, they would have committed the five books of Moses to memory from early childhood.

- They have heard the truth; from Jesus' lips they simply don't believe the truth.
- They were more concerned with the traditions of the Fathers than they were with the Word of God.
- Jesus charges them with total, complete, utter ignorance of the Truth! And he takes them to the Pentateuch to prove his point. (*the books they say they believe*)

Mark 12:26 **And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."**

- Jesus is quoting here from the 3rd chapter of the book of Exodus, long after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would have died.

Nevertheless, God says, **"I AM" the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**

- He uses the Emphatic Present Tense of the verb "to be." NOT the past tense,
- He didn't say "I was" the God of Abraham.
- Since God IS presently the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob they must still be ALIVE albeit in a different realm.

IT IS IMPORTANT that we understand when Jesus was faced with the erroneous belief of the Sadducees he took them BACK to the Word of God and He expounded the Scriptures in a clear and concise way, pointing to the words and even the verb tenses that were used to reveal divine truth.

- The Bible is the one and only authoritative source of absolute truth.
- And God is the one who chose to reveal Himself to man through His unchanging Word.

That is why we take the time to expound on the Word of God verse by verse when we gather together.

When God said, **I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob**, he was speaking of the eternal, love relationship that he has with his chosen people.

- YES, even beyond the grave God knows his sheep, God loves his sheep, God feeds and leads his sheep.
- That is why Paul could say with joy and confidence:

2 Corinthians 5:8 **Yes, we are of good courage, and we would RATHER be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**

- At home with the Lord we will see him as he is, we will behold His glory, we will come into his throne room, we will sup at his table, we will sing His praises with the angelic host, we will live with Him forever, He will wipe away our tears

Steve Lawson: “We will never be any more alive than 5 seconds after we die.”

- The night before Jesus was crucified he said to his disciples:

John 14:1 **“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.**

2 **In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?**

3 **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

- There are many things in this life that will trouble your hearts, (marriage, children, jobs, money, sickness,)
 - In this broken and sinful world there are many trials, tragedies and traumas to endure BUT:
- If you will repent of your sin and believe the Gospel there is no need to be troubled over death.

1 Cor 15:51 **Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

GOD IS NOT THE God of the dead , he is the God of the living!!

- Jesus said to those who did not believe: **You are quite wrong.**
 - Grievously mistaken!

There is a final judgment, There is life after death, There is heaven and there is hell, there is an endless eternity, and great reward for the faithful, there is a glad reunion with loved ones who have gone before, there is the throne of God and the glory of God, There is a city of God, where the Lamb will be the Light, there is a tree of life and a future inheritance that can never spoil or fade for all who believe on Jesus Christ.

There is also a place of outer darkness, away from the presence of God where torment continues and does not end. There is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone. It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth...

- This is the eternal dwelling for those who do not believe.

TODAY is a day of grace, today if you hear his voice calling you to repent and trust in Christ I beg of you! do not harden your heart....