

The Gospel According to Mark - Badly Mistaken

July 14, 2019

Badly Mistaken

Mark 12:18-27

Intro: "It's Your breath in our lungs so we pour out our praise!" Every breath we take is a gift from God! In fact, our very lives are a gift from God and the way we live our lives is our gift back to God! And the hope we have of life eternal is also a gift from God. Without that hope, the hope of resurrection, our lives here on earth can become a disaster as we live as if eternity does not matter. Eternity does matter and our understanding of God in this life is more important than a majority of people realize. This morning we will tackle a most interesting subject as we discover how the Sadducees were badly mistaken in their understanding of eternal life and it greatly effected their ability to understand life from God's perspective. Let's pray and we'll read our text and see how it applies to our lives. Pray.

Okay, let's turn to our passage for today in Mark's Gospel, Mark 12:18ff...

Mark 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.

Mark 12:19 "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

Mark 12:20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children.

Mark 12:21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third.

Mark 12:22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too.

Mark 12:23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

Mark 12:24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

Mark 12:25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Mark 12:26 Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

First of all this was a farfetched and ridiculous question! The Sadducees didn't even believe in a resurrection. That's why they were sad you see! Okay, think about that one for a second or two. In about five minutes someone's going to laugh out loud, don't worry about them, they just got it! The very fact they would ask a question, the way they did, about something they didn't even believe in gives us some insight into their motive. Like the Pharisees and other religious leaders, they were also trying to trap Jesus in His words so they could shut His teaching ministry down!

Because they could not understand, prove or rationally explain the concept of resurrection, they simply rejected it. Many religions today are based on the same ideology. If you cannot by mans reasoning explain it, reject it. The Sadducees couldn't explain or prove the concept of resurrection so they simply rejected it. There are examples of this in our world today...

The Trinity, God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is rejected by the Jehovah's witnesses because they can't explain it! The Divinity of Jesus is rejected by the Mormons and Muslims because they can't explain or understand how this could be possible in a monotheistic faith, belief in one true God!

And some who believe only in the scientific method of discovering truth, do not accept the concept of resurrection and eternal life because they cannot apply the scientific method to the concept. Originally there were five steps in the scientific method developed by Sir Francis Bacon: Ask a question/Do background research/Construct hypothesis/Test with an experiment/ Analyze results and draw conclusion. So spirituality is sometimes rejected because it cannot be scientifically tested. But we must remember that our inability to

understand God's perspective does not negate God's perspective or the reality of something we cannot by human means prove or test in a laboratory. The reason of man cannot explain the reality of God. In fact God's Word speaks to this issue in Isaiah...

Isa 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

Isa 55:9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

One of the most prolific theologians and pastors of the 20th century, Ray C. Steadman, who went home to be with the Lord in 1992, left a treasure trove of books and commentaries on Scripture and practical application of living an authentic Christian life. Listen to his words on this subject...

"Now, within the purview of its field science is very helpful and does some tremendously helpful things. I am not speaking against science, but we must always recognize what Blaise Pascal put so beautifully when he said, 'The ultimate purpose of reason is to bring us to the place where we see that there is a limit to reason.' That is what is wrong with the so-called scientific mind. These men were excluding all the supernatural from their thinking. Scientists often do this, saying, 'In the scientific realm there is no room for speculation about life after death. Nobody can prove it or verify it. Nobody who has been there has ever come back. Therefore, it is an irrelevant fact that has no meaning to life.'"

Having quoted Steadman on this, I want to remind you that some of the most prominent scientific minds of our day are men and women of great faith!! They understand that not everything can be tested in a lab and just because something cannot be fully understood or subjected to scientific method does not preclude its reality. And while there are certainly spiritual realities revealed in the natural world, many are discovered in a lab of faith and personal experience, but are confirmed and supported through super-natural revelation of God. And where do we find that supernatural revelation of God? Well Jesus let's us know in the first element needed to see life from God's perspective!

Mark 12:24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures . . .

Element #1: Know the Scriptures

What forms the foundation for your philosophy of life?

This is most important, for it shapes what you do, why you do what you do and the outcome of what you do! If your reason or purpose for life is not right everything else will be off center.

A wrong understanding of purpose has destroyed nations, churches, businesses, marriages, and individual lives. What authority backs your philosophy or purpose in life? Is the foundation of your philosophy of life based on what you feel is true, or what you think is true, or what you hope is true? The problem with these things being your foundation is they are ever changing and quite unstable. Feelings change, they come and go and are based on circumstances. What you think may change depending on what's popular or most advantageous, or what seems like a good idea. What you hope for may not be what you really need or what would be best for you! And when you base your life on feelings and opinions you will find yourself without any real authority to back your philosophy and without authority, you lose legitimacy and direction for life. An individual, a church, or an organization that finds its purpose and philosophy in the inspired and authoritative Word of God discovers the secret to true success in life.

Northshore Church's purpose is to see the One who gave His life for us exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed!

Our purpose is of course based on Scripture and that gives authority and direction for our Church! It is also important for you as an individual to find your authority and direction from God's Word. Dr. Bo Henderson, one of my mentors, used to have a saying that he led the congregation to repeat before he would preach. It went something like this...

"I believe the Bible to be God's Holy Word, true and without any mixture of error. I will base my life on the authority of God's Word. Where my life differs from God's Word I will by God's grace change to conform to its standards and principles."

Let's be honest with God and ourselves. How much time do we spend getting to know what God's Word actually says about different subjects? Is Sunday service the only day of the week you encounter God's Word? If a co-worker asked you what you believe about an important life issue, would you know enough to give an answer based on Godly principles? Paul encouraged young Timothy with the following words...

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Tim 3:17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

What is the practical application of this? What does knowing Scripture actually do for me in my day to day life? For this we will let the Psalmist teach us. Psalm 119:9-16...

Psalm 119:9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

Psalm 119:10 I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:12 Praise be to you, Lord;

teach me your decrees.

Psalm 119:13 With my lips I recount

all the laws that come from your mouth.

Psalm 119:14 I rejoice in following your statutes

as one rejoices in great riches.

Psalm 119:15 I meditate on your precepts

and consider your ways.

Psalm 119:16 I delight in your decrees;

I will not neglect your word.

You might ask why we have to get all of this from the Bible? Why can't I look to other sources? For this answer I want to quote one of my professors I had back at Mississippi College. Dr. William W. Stevens

"God takes the initiative toward fallen man and manifests himself in redeeming love. What man receives in revelation he could never discern through his own initiative and power. God makes himself known, and so becomes both the subject and object of revelation. Man does not discover God as he discovers truth in a scientific laboratory. Man does seek after God, but that seeking could never produce sufficient knowledge of God's nature. God produces that knowledge in the heart and mind of man. In fact the very seeking itself was instilled in man by God. Therefore we can say that revelation is God's work throughout; it is God-centered. Revelation is not only from God; it is of God. And this 'of God' does not mean merely truth about God. It is the unveiling of his essential hiddenness. It is God entering human experience that man might feel and know his presence and power. It is the offering of himself in fellowship."

God offered Himself to us by revealing Himself to us in the written Word, Holy Scripture, so we should take the time to get to know His Word!

And this leads us to a second element needed to see life from God's perspective...

Mark 12:24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

Element #2: Know the Power of God

If we see life only through the perspective of humankind, life becomes meaningless!

The reason? Human power can never achieve all that God has for us. Life based on human power alone, is prideful, (I don't need God's help) misdirected, (earthly goals become primary) and improperly motivated, (It's all about me). Once again I would like to quote from Ray Steadman in one of his commentaries on the Gospel of Mark. He amplifies what Jesus was saying in our passage. Speaking of our passage, Steadman says...

“Now He (Jesus) is very blunt and minces no words.” ‘You are wrong,’ he says. ‘Your whole view of life has made you wrong. You’re so sure you’re right. You have narrowed life down to a very limited view, and you say that’s all there is. And looking at life from that narrow perspective, you cannot see the reality that lies beyond. You’re wrong because you fail to recognize two great facts: One, God has knowledge that man does not have. God’s knowledge is infinitely greater than man’s. That is why we have the Scriptures. You don’t know the Scriptures, obviously, for that is where God’s knowledge, far greater than man’s, is made known to us.’

Steadman then says...

“Things that only God knows are made known to us in only one place, the Scriptures. The folly of men who reject the Scriptures is that they thus lock themselves into a narrow slice of life, bounded only by that which can be seen and felt and weighted and measured and verified by the senses of man. Man himself then becomes the boundary of life. Second, Jesus said, ‘You don’t know the power of God. Even if you do know the Scriptures, you don’t believe them, because you don’t believe that God has power to do what man cannot do. You’ve bounded your life by the knowledge and power of man. You’ve exalted man to the place where you think he knows everything that can be known, and there is nothing beyond his power. So, you’re wrong.”

Such powerful insight. In order to see life from God’s perspective and to live life according to God’s perspective we must know the power of God! How do we gain access to the power of God in our daily lives? First we must accept Jesus as our Savior by admitting we are sinners and need a Savior, believing Jesus died to be our Savior, and by calling upon Him to be our Savior. Secondly we allow Jesus, on a daily basis to become our Lord, helping guide us in our decisions, priorities, attitudes, and actions! The next two steps go together in a powerful way. We begin studying God’s Word and allow His Holy Spirit to help us understand and implement what we are studying! We read this passage recently but it speaks to the power of God in such a marvelous way. Paul said...

Col 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Col 1:10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Col 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Col 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Col 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So there’s the power of God to live this life in such a way that glorifies God and brings real purpose and meaning to our personal lives on this planet!! But there’s something more in our passage. Another element that helps us see things from God’s perspective. Jesus said...

Mark 12:25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Element #3: Know the reality of future life

Notice Jesus said when the dead rise not if they rise! Once we establish that there is a resurrection, we naturally want to know what it will be like on the other side of that resurrection...what will heaven will be like? And if you think heaven is only about finally getting all the worldly things you couldn’t have in this life, you have not understood the concept of heaven. It is not about a mansion, bigger cars, better things, or even that fairy tale relationship you maybe couldn’t find here on earth. For those who have a wonderful marriage, this passage may seem a little troubling. But we have to remember Heaven is about your Creator and your Redeemer. It’s about finally being in the presence of the lover of your soul. It’s about having an eternity to experience the kindness, grace and mercy of the one who loved you so much He died a horrible death so you could get to heaven. It’s hard to fathom the kind of eternal joy and the special relationship we will have with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ in eternity but Paul gives us a glimpse...

Phil 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Phil 3:21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

And then one of my favorite passages in all of the Bible, and I have several favorites, John's vision of heaven which he shares in Revelation 5...

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Rev 5:11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

Rev 5:12 In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Rev 5:13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Rev 5:14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Wow!! "Pastor Larry are you sure this stuff is real? I mean, it sounds so good to be true!" Listen to what John said in his first letter...

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I wrote a song some years ago and it says this... "It's not a hope so someday, it's a know so one day!" And how can we be so sure? It's because of the nature of God! He doesn't lie and His Word doesn't lie! And this is our forth and final element we must know which will help us understand life from God's perspective. This element comes from the last thing Jesus said in our text today...

Mark 12:26 Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!

Element #4: Know the Nature of God

The Sadducees did not know or understand the Nature of God! They didn't believe in a resurrection, but they claimed to believe the writings of Moses and saw them as divinely inspired! Jesus is quoting from the book of Exodus...

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

Jesus wanted them to hear it from their own Holy Scriptures that there is a resurrection. God didn't say to Moses, "I was the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," but, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." That's why Jesus then said...

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!

You see, it matters that you know the Scriptures so you don't miss important things like the difference between God saying "I Am" rather than "I was." And in this exchange, Jesus is letting the Sadducees know that they were badly mistaken, not only about the resurrection, but also about the nature of God. It's almost like they had forgotten the following words in their own Scriptures...

Deu 31:30 And Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

Deu 32:1 Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Deu 32:2 Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.

Deu 32:3 I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

Deu 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

That could be a whole other series of sermons right there on The Nature of God! But suffice to say that understanding God's perspective on life, especially your life, will come into focus when you acknowledge the nature of God. He is...

Holy/Righteous /Just /Faithful/Truthful/Loving/Full of Grace/Full of Mercy/Forgiving

What a perspective!

Let's pray!