

Matthew 22:23-46 – “Resurrection and Relationships”

How many of you have taken time to really think about what heaven is going to be like? Are those thoughts filled more with excited anticipation or concerned questions? A question I’ll often hear is, ‘Will my pet be in heaven?’ And if your pet is a cat, I can most certainly say, *No they won’t* 😊.

Another question that gets asked is, what will our relationships be like in heaven? Will I still be married to my spouse? Many are hoping for that. Some may be hoping for a little break. Like, if I’m still married will I continue to have the honey-do lists? Am I still required to bring her flowers? What will our relationships be like for eternity? Well, we get to answer some of these questions in today’s study.

Summary Statement:

Resurrection life is going to be full of surprises and blessing. This world is not meant to be our satisfaction and joy, as is evidenced by what Jesus had to endure at the hands of conniving people seeking to challenge Him.

1. The Sadducees Challenge About Resurrection – 22:23-33

22:23-28 - *The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, ²⁴ saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁵ Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all the woman died also. ²⁸ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.”*

The Sadducees were the wealthier group of the Jewish religious council known as the Sanhedrin. They were like the aristocrats. They were in charge of the temple, it’s services and concessions. But they didn’t believe in the resurrection. They were materialistic, they were the ones seeking to live their best life now.

- This thinking and theology was quite Sad-U-See, which is how you remember who they were.
- The Pharisees were legalistic. They placed heavy burdens on people to make them feel like they were upholding the law. It just wasn’t Fair-U-See, which is how you remember who they were.

These are two groups in our text who are posing a challenge to Jesus, seeking to test Him for the purpose of trapping Him and have a reason to convict Him.

So the Sadducees come to Jesus with a hypothetical question that's based on their Mosaic Law. Now the Sadducees only held to the first 5 books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch. So they pull out a situation that they feel is going to pose a problem if there really is a resurrection.

They go with a situation known as the Levirate law, or Levirate marriage. This is taken from Deuteronomy 25:5 where if a man is married and dies before having any offspring with his wife, that man's brother is to be with her and provide a child to preserve familial inheritance and support of the widow.

And so the Sadducees really exaggerate this scenario and share about a woman becoming a widow and then went down the line of brothers until she went through 7 husbands.

Now when you read this you're left with a lot of questions. What kind of cook was this woman? Everybody is dying around her. And you can understand the first two brothers walking into this a little naïve. The third one I'm sure is starting to get a little suspicious, he's probably a little nervous. But the 6th and 7th brothers you're just saying they're idiots. They really should know better, they got what was coming to them. I don't think this woman is even getting to the resurrection, maybe she's learning how to cook in other ways, if you catch my drift.

- But nevertheless, the gotcha question the Sadducees are hoping to trap Jesus in is: **...in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.**
- It poses a dilemma that if people move into an afterlife after death, how will these relationships all play out? This gave them reason to be critical of a resurrection.

Let's see how Jesus handles this problem.

22:29-30 - Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

Jesus says right off the bat, **you are mistaken**; you've got it all wrong. And He hits the Sadducees with two things: (1) you don't know the **Scriptures**, (2) you don't know the **power of God**.

- They didn't know the **Scriptures** because they stopped after Deuteronomy. But many Scriptures taught the resurrection and life to come (ie. Psalm 16:10-11; Isaiah 25:8, 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Job 19:25-27; Hosea 13:14).

This is not even getting into the New Testament Scriptures dealing with resurrection as Jesus just has the Old Testament. But there's enough there for them to have understood the concept of a resurrection.

- They didn't know the **power of God** because they thought that if there was a resurrection God would just raise them up and they would continue on with life as normal. Relationships would just be resumed and there would be an awkwardness now if someone had been married more than once. The problem was that they failed to see the power of God in that He makes all things new. We don't just resume life as we know it; we have resurrected life. We're transformed. We're made for something beyond this earth and life. Things are going to be different.
- Could you imagine if we go to heaven and we're still dealing with relationships as we know them now? My wife is not much of a hugger. I on the other hand am always ready for a hug. Now, in heaven, we're going to be made perfect. That means, my wife is going to be a hugger in heaven. And if I'm still married to her in heaven, I'm going to see her going around to all these people (men included) just hugging them out of the blue. And I'm going to be sitting there wondering how come I didn't get that kind of treatment here on earth?? Why is she hugging all these people? I may begin to get a little jealous. My wife is going to cause me to sin in heaven if that were possible. That's why we're not going to be married in heaven.

You see, marriages are designed for earth. They're designed for companionship and procreation. We need that to see humanity continue. But in eternity there's no death, thus there's no need for procreation. The exclusiveness of marriage is absolutely appropriate for this temporary life, but it's not necessary for eternity. We're going to enjoy perfect relationships in heaven without the encumber some nuances that earthly marriage relationships involve.

- Paul himself said in 1 Corinthians 7 that I wish you could all be single as he was. It gave him the freedom to serve God without distraction. So too in heaven. I believe we'll know one another, but we're not going to be bound to our earthly relationships and will be free to worship God like never before, as we were created to do.

Now keep in mind, this doesn't say we will be angels, but that we will be **like angels of God in heaven**. Angels are worried about their relationships or finding that 'special someone'. They're sole focus is on worshipping God and serving Him! They already have the perfect special someone.

Will we know one another in heaven? Yes! We're not going to be dumber but smarter. We're going to be made complete; perfect. We will know each other but our focus is going to be on Jesus. He's so much better than anything or anyone else we can be with.

22:31-33 - *But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* ³³ *And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

Jesus now reminds them what their own Scriptures said on this issue.

He quotes from **Exodus 3:6**, the passage where God speaks to Moses out of the burning bush, and God said, *"I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."*

He didn't say, *'I was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but they're dead now, so, C'est la vie!'*

- If God identifies Himself as their God now (after they've died) then it must mean they're experiencing life. And that is indeed true, for God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living!
- And the reality is this is not just a truth for later. Jesus has come that we may have life and life more abundantly. That we may experience life to the full now. You may be experiencing life to be a drag, but I tell you today, there is a way out. It's through Jesus. He is the way the truth and the life! Don't miss out on the power of God available for you.

2. The Pharisees Challenge About Religion – 22:34-40

22:34-36 - *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"*

Here come the religious leaders with another question hoping to corner Jesus. A question about which is the greatest commandment is posed by this lawyer.

- A lawyer in this day isn't exactly how we would picture them in our day. Lawyers were experts in the Mosaic law and were the ones interpreting and teaching it. They were seen more as a religious representative than a crook as we know them today 😊.

Now regarding their commandments, the religious leaders had reduced the law to 613 commands – 365 negative ones (prohibitions – thou shall not) and 248 positive ones (thou shall). They put a lot of energy into trying to prioritize what were the weightier matters of the law. So, they wonder what Jesus might say about this. Their hope is that Jesus will emphasize one part of the law at the exclusion of others and be found in neglect of a portion of the law.

But we all know by now that you're not going to stump Jesus. He takes them to a higher plane and quotes from the Shema which didn't isolate a part of the law but summarized the law.

22:37-40 - Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

The Shema (meaning to ‘hear’) was the confession of faith found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, which pious Jews still recite twice a day. In doing this, Jesus defines the law in it's essence: love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18). This is the whole of the law, this is what God desires.

- The law was divided up into two sections: the first 4 dealt with our responsibility to God, and the last 6 dealt with our responsibility to our fellow man.
- If we're loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we're going to be keeping those commands dealing with our responsibility towards God. And if we're loving our neighbour as ourselves, we're going to fulfill those commands dealing with our responsibility to others. In so doing, we'll be fulfilling the very heart of the law.
- **Romans 13:8**, *"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."*
- **Romans 13:10**, *"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."*

With the religious leaders running out of challenges to try and trap Jesus, He now turns the table on them and brings a challenge for them to sort out.

[3. Jesus' Challenge About Rulership – 22:41-46](#)

22:41-42 - *While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.”*

Jesus posed a question that centered in on the relationship between the Christ and King David. The Jews all believed that the Old Testament prophesied of a coming Christ, which means ‘anointed one’. It’s translated in Hebrew as Messiah. Christ and Messiah are synonymous. This Christ would be a political deliverer who would bring Israel back into independence and theocracy. He would occupy the throne of David and be a descendant of David. That was the Jewish view of the Christ.

So they all answered that He would be ***the Son of David***.

22:43-46 - *He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? ⁴⁵ If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”*

Jesus then gives a follow up question based out of Psalm 110:1.

- And just a side note, notice how Jesus confirms that David wrote this Psalm and wrote it through the Holy Spirit. Mark quotes Jesus saying, ***For David himself said by the Holy Spirit...***(Mark 12:36). I’m sure you’ve heard people say that the Bible was just written by men. Well, they’re right, but they were men who were moved by God Himself what to write. This book we have is completely given by God, it is completely trustworthy, completely dependable, unaltered and unchanging. May it be greatly treasured!

If the Christ is David’s Son, how does he call Him Lord?

A Father would never call his son a Lord. In other words, for David to do this means that the Messiah, the Christ, was greater than David!

Messiah is David’s Lord because He is God, but He is David’s son because He became man and was born into David’s family. (See Romans 1:3, Acts 2:32–36, 13:22–23.)

- **Revelation 22:16**, *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”*

- He is the root in that He brought David into existence, but He is the offspring because He was born of a virgin through the line of David. This is why the incarnation is so important.
- You see, Jesus is both son and Lord. This is an incredible realization because it reveals clearly that Jesus would be both Man and God. It's wonderful because He came as fully man that He might be the complete and perfect sacrifice for our sin. He can represent humanity and stand in our place to take the judgment of God for sin that we deserved. And being fully God, His sacrifice was accepted because He was pure and holy. He was able to make that transaction of bringing us out of bondage and death and place us in His marvelous light.

The Jews awaited a Son of David that would come and re-establish the glorious kingdom and reign of David. But Jesus was more than a son that had come to set up an earthly kingdom, He is Lord who has come to establish salvation for all.

Points to Ponder:

1. Are you excited for heaven and eternity? Are you holding more closely to earthly relationships than you are to being with Jesus?
2. Is your love for God higher than all other loves? Is your love for Him (and His love for you) motivating you to live in greater obedience to Him?
3. Does Jesus hold the title of Lord in your life? Has that transcended from mere head knowledge to heart submission?