**THE GOD OF THE LIVING**

Mark 12:18-27 (Key Verse 27)

*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!*

In today’s passage we are going to learn from Jesus who taught the Sadducees who came to him with a question to prove that there is no resurrection. How did Jesus teach the Sadducees? He taught them by revealing to them their sin problem. First, their reliance on logic over faith which led them to limited understanding of the scriptures. Secondly their lack of knowledge of who God is. Therefore, through today’s passage we going to learn how to overcome relying on logic, and to live by faith. Secondly, we are going to learn who God is, from the key verse we learn that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Furthermore, we are therefore going to learn what it means to us that God is the God of the living and not the dead. May God have mercy on us today to receive one word and be filled with faith in the God of the living.

The passage today begins with the Sadducees who came to Jesus with a question. Now before we look into their question, let us understand who the Sadducees were, first they together with the Pharisees were the largest sect of Judaism. Their political power in the Sanhedrin was very strong, with the help and cooperation of the Roman officials. They were rather practical people who denied existence of things that are not practical like immortality of the soul and the existence of angels. They did not believe in resurrection. Regarding the Bible they only believed in the first 5 books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Now what was their question to Jesus? Let us look at **verse 19-23**:

*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 raise up offspring for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”*

The Sadducees came to Jesus and asked this question based on the Law of Moses on marriage in **Deuteronomy 25:5-6.** Their intention for asking this question was to prove that believing in resurrection was irrational. The intention of the law was to help preserve the name of a brother who dies without having a son, by having his brother marry his wife and bear a Son for his brother so that his name is not blotted out of Israel. This law really had good intentions for the benefit of the people of Israel. But the Sadducees wanting to prove their point on resurrection being irrational, they turned this story into a sad one. They made an example with a woman who must be married seven times by his brothers-in-law, they said at resurrection whose wife will she be? They said this to demonstrate that if there is resurrection, then such complicated problems will arise. They said this to make the idea of resurrection seem unreasonable, absurd and nonsensical.

How then did Jesus respond to them? Let us first look at **verse 24-25**:

*24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.*

Here Jesus pointed out that they are in error, because they did not know the scriptures or the power of God. They knew the Bible, but they only selectively accepted it. They only accepted parts they could rationally explain and understand. Yes, it is important to seek rationality as it helps us understand things better and strengthen our thought process. At the same time, we cannot only accept things that make logical sense to us, some things are beyond our capability and level of comprehension. If we only rely on our own logic we will not grow, we need to go beyond our logic, we need to rely on faith. Because the Sadducees relied on logic and nothing beyond, even though they studied so much for many years they could not come to the realization and experience of the power of God. Jesus said they did not know the scriptures or the power of God. To know the power of God we need to accept the word of God by faith and overcome our logic. Logically resurrection does not make sense to the human logical mind, but when we accept it by faith it enables us to experience the power of God. In **Philippians 3:10** Apostle Paul said: “*I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death…”* Let us pray that as we study the Bible weekly that we may do so by faith, faith that is beyond logic, seek to know Jesus and the power of his ressurection, so that we can experience the power of God.

Furthermore, Jesus said to the Sadducees in **verse 25** saying: *When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.* Jesus said this to the Sadducees because he realized that their thoughts were bound to this world and the physical life. The Sadducees came up with this tragic story about marriage because even though they did not believe in resurrection, in their consideration they looked at resurrection as an extension of the of their present life. They were so obsessed about life in this world that they bounded everything in this world, this explains their lifestyle, their pursuit of power, authority and they likes. They were basically very worldly people, with no genuine consideration for God. Because of this they missed the full understanding of resurrection. The resurrection that the Bible speaks of is not an extension of the life here on earth, it is entirely different from our current life here on earth.

The world that we live in today will be gone, there will be a new heaven and earth, our bodies will become like those of the angels in heaven by the power of God. We will be transformed into holy, pure, magnificent spiritual beings without any material desires, we will be free from ageing, diseases, death and we will be transformed into eternal beings. So there will not be marriage at the resurrection, marriage was created only for human beings in the flesh, it is for human beings who will die. And so, the answer to the Sadducees question on whose wife the unfortunate woman will be, is that there is no need to worry about such things after resurrection. We do not need to worry about complications of this world at resurrection, for the word of God promises that at resurrection all will be perfect, we will be transformed into spiritual beings not bounded by anything in this world.

Furthermore, in **verse 26-27** Jesus said:

*26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, 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!”*

Here Jesus quoted scripture from the book of Moses, **Exodus 3:4-6** which is one the books that the Sadducees claimed to believe in. In this scripture Jesus first revealed to them that when God spoke to Moses about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he spoke in the present tense, he said I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. When God appeared to Moses on the burning bush, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had died 400 years ago, and yet God did not say I was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, rather he said I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This only implied that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are no longer dead, but alive. This implied that they rose from the dead, God in the very scripture that Sadducees believed in, revealed that indeed resurrection is a fact, God revealed his power of resurrection by raising Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the dead.

Furthermore, in our **key verse 27**, Jesus concluded saying: “*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”* Here Jesus first emphasized the point that indeed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive, risen by the power of God, and hence the Lord is the God of the living and not the dead. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Secondly, Jesus said this to reveal to the Sadducees their fundamental problem. Even today, though we are living and walking, some people are dead and some are living by the power of God. Now who are the living and who are the dead? The dead are those who say there is no resurrection because it is illogical, just like the Sadducees. These people deny the power of God with their narrow mind, logic and material seeking attitude. Because of their attitude, they refuse to surrender their lives to God and live by faith. Because of this, they cannot experience the power of God, they cannot grow but rather remain shallow with no wisdom from God. And worst of all they cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand, those who are living are those who believe in the Bible, accept God as the Almighty, transcending all logic and rationality. God is the God of people with faith in resurrection, those who live a life of hope and joy. They live holy lives due to their hope in resurrection. Such people will enjoy life in the Kingdom of heaven. Such people live life with faith and absolute trust that God is the source of life, they live life with faith that it is God who makes life worth living, he is the source of meaning and purpose in life. They live with faith that death cannot separate us from the God, for God is the God of the living and not the dead, and his promise is that He will be our God forever, just as he was, is and will always be the God of Abaraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God is the God of the living and not the dead. May God have mercy on us to overcome our limited boundaries of logic and rationality, have faith in the power of God which transcend all understanding so that we too can become the living, who live by faith. When we live by faith, the power of God will enable us to live holy lives and enjoy eternal life in the kingdom of heaven.

**Conclusion**

From today’s passage we have learnt that the Sadducees did not know the scriptures or the power of God, even though they studied the word so hard and for a very long time. They became like this because they focused too much on logic and rationality. Instead of realizing the power of God’s resurrection, they came up some sad story to make resurrection seem illogical and nonsensical. Their thinking left them spiritually dead; they were dead because they could not experience the power of God. From the key verse, we learnt that God is the God of the living, we learnt that the living are those who live beyond the limits of their mind, logic and rationality, those who believe in the scriptures and the power of God by faith. This is who God wants us to be, the living, those who live by resurrection faith.

Today in our ministry and personal life we have various prayer topics, we are praying for marriages by faith, we are praying for healing, we are praying for God to raise campus Shepherds and Shepherdesses, we are praying for growth of our sheep, jobs. All this prayer topics are in line with the promises of God according to his word. From today’s word we have learnt that we should put our faith in the power of God, we should not let logic, rationality hinder our faith. We should put our faith in God who has the resurrection power. Let us live life as the living, God is the God of the living and not the dead.