

## GOD OF THE LIVING

Luke 20:27-38 Text vs. 38 *"He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."*

Keep your Bibles open to our Gospel lesson. We're going back to look at several other passages this morning.

Now, the Sadducees were an upper-class connected with everything going on in the Temple in Jerusalem. They tended to be wealthy and held a great deal of power among the Jews. They held powerful positions in the Temple, including that of the chief priests and high priest. And they held the majority of the seventy seats of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin. In today's lesson, they tried to trip Jesus up with a question about the resurrection. They weren't looking for answers. They were just trying to show that the idea of a resurrection was ridiculous. They were trying to make Jesus look foolish, because they denied there was a resurrection of the dead. They fiercely opposed the Apostles' teaching Jesus had risen from the dead after His crucifixion. They denied there was an afterlife. They believed all souls perish at death. There were no penalties. No rewards after this earthly life. They even denied the existence of angels and demons. Why? Because they weren't seeing both sides.

They were like the repair man at the car body repair shop who was working on a car banged up on both sides. He had made significant repairs. Taking his time. Feeling the edges. Touching the paint up to the point of perfection that was feathered out perfectly. The customer came by to see how the repairs were coming along, and to the repair man's surprise, the customer began to complain. He didn't understand. The car owner showed him the paint didn't match. There were bumps and valleys. It was horrible. He raised his voice and demanded an explanation. He threatened not to pay for the repairs. "Well," the repair man finally said, "all I can say is, the repairs I've made so far were on the other side of your car!"

Likewise, Jesus had a difficult time explaining the resurrection to the Sadducees. They pretended like they had questions. But no matter how wisely, or correctly, Jesus answered, they weren't about to believe Him. They were comparing a resurrected life to this present life. So, Jesus avoided their trap and showed them where they failed to understand the resurrection. He used a passage from the third chapter of Exodus where Moses encountered God at the burning bush and God revealed His holy name. It was from *The Torah*, Moses' five books of the law. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Jesus pointed out to the Sadducees the proof of an afterlife by saying when God spoke to Moses, God said, *"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* That would only be possible if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive. It made *The Torah* clearly support the resurrection. Dead are raised to life because God is a God of the living. Not the dead! The Sadducees should have known that. Listen, a president can't be a president unless he has people to govern who are alive! And neither can God be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob unless they are alive.

Now, look at verse 35. *"Those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come, and in the resurrection from the dead, will neither marry, nor be given in marriage."* Look at that and ask yourself are you worthy enough to take part in the Age to come? The New Life? The life after this life? Are you worthy enough for it? Your conscience may say, *"No, I'm too sinful. Look at what I've done with my life. There's no way someone as sinful as I am could ever enjoy that new life in heaven."* Well, the Devil would certainly agree with that, saying *"God, You can't let that person enjoy eternal life. Look at all the bad thoughts that person's had. Look at the secret sins they've hidden. This person isn't worthy to take part in the new life that is to come."* That's what the Devil would say! But it's not what Jesus would say! So, how do you become *"worthy of taking part in the age to come?"* Well, there's a group of *"worthy"* people in the book of **Revelation, Chapter 7. Turn to it! . . . . Verse 9** says there's *a great multitude in heaven*. And then further down in **Verse 13** the question is asked, *"These in white robes, who are they?"* The answer is **verse 14**. *"These are they who have come out of the great tribulation."* Then comes the most important phrase. *"They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

That's what makes you worthy. Your robe has been washed clean in the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. His sacrificial blood was shed for you on the cross, and as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. *That's* what makes you worthy! You've asked for your sins to be forgiven. But have you been forgiven? You heard about that last week. Remember when I asked you *if Jesus knows your name?* Then I said, He does, if you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And if you've done that, you can rest assured He does know your name, and that your name has already been written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. Then I read to you what John said about that in the Book of Revelation. *"I saw a great white throne, and Him who was seated on it. From His presence, earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done."*

And I don't have to tell you, you already know we're living in a time when a lot of people don't care about God. Or about life after death. In London, atheists paid for ads to be put on the sides of buses that read, *"There is no God, and*

*there is no hell. Relax and enjoy your life.*” What hope do they have for their future? What’s their real purpose in life? Just eat, drink, and make merry? What a sad state of existence!

Last week, *Leftists* protesting at a recent event at the University of Wisconsin stole a copy of the Bible from the hands of a street preacher who was exercising his First Amendment rights. One protester took the Bible out of his hands and ate it! Yes, ate it!

It doesn’t take long to see this kind of spiritual confusion is common in our world today. Because some people reject all of Scripture. The Bible’s nothing more to them than just a piece of fiction. But when Christians try to link God’s Word with what’s fashionable beliefs of the world today, it’s upsetting! I’m talking about marriage, human sexuality, gender identity and abortion. Such an approach to Scripture, even with the best of intentions, doesn’t come from a heart of faith. It comes from a heart of unbelief. It comes from one who doesn’t believe God really can change hearts, minds, and lives.

Disobeying the truth of Scripture is not the heart of the Christian faith. Scriptural truth is what shapes the heart, the mind, and the life of the Christian. Some are like those Sadducees. They fail to understand the resurrected life belongs to a completely different kind of existence. In the new afterlife, you will not experience death. You will be like the angels. And since the resurrection hangs on three things: accountability before God, judgement, and eternal life, without the resurrection, death would be the end of it all. You would be limited to living this life only! God’s Judgement and eternal life would be meaningless to you. But the resurrection offers the opportunity for you to enter a new life in which the Sadducees didn’t believe. They claimed there was no proof of it! But the fact is, you will die. There’s no escaping that. But because of Jesus who died on the cross and was raised again from death, you too will live and die with God’s promise that He will raise you from death into a new life where, in the words of Jesus, you *“cannot die, because you are like angels, and you are a child of God, being a child of the resurrection”*. (20:36)

Now, this is not a sad sermon.

This is a glorious sermon!

Because this life is not the end. It is just the beginning! Jesus said, your body will be different. You’ll never die in the life to come. You won’t marry. All your aches and pains, all your physical problems will be no more. (1 Corinthians 15:42-53.) What a blessed assurance!

So, let me ask you again. Are you a child of the resurrection? Are you worthy of the resurrection? If you’re watching this sermon on our website at home, or you’re reading it as an email I’ve sent you, and you want to talk about this and ask questions, call your local pastor. If you don’t have one, call me. My phone is listed on our website. I will be more than happy to talk with you about your future life with God in His eternal Kingdom. There’s a place waiting there for you with the God of the living. Just make sure your name is there, written in His book, *The Lamb’s Book of Life*. AMEN