

The title for today's message is; **Heaven**

Jesus said;

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

How would you like to live under a religion that believed in no life after death, no resurrection?

In one sense, I guess you wouldn't have to worry about eternally burning in hell. That would be nice for some I'm sure.

But what hope would you have for the future? And what would your real purpose in life be? What need would you have of any religion?

What a sad state of existence it would be, if we didn't believe in a life after death. But that's what the Sadducees believed!

They only accepted the first five books of the Bible as truly being "God's Word". They denied the existence of angels and demons.

And so the Sadducees approached Jesus with a question that they felt would prove there is no life after death, or at least get him to question it.

So today Jesus answers the question. How Do I Know There Will Be Saints in Heaven?

When this took place, Jesus was already in the third year of his public ministry. In fact he was only three days from his crucifixion.

By this point in His ministry, the spiritual leaders of the time, the Sadducees and the Pharisees had quite enough of Jesus.

He humiliated them. He proved them to be wrong. In their eyes, he had stolen many of their followers with his "romantic" ideas of what Judaism is really about.

So they finally decided to attack Jesus with this one last round of questions to try and discredit him.

They were already 0 for 2, and this would be their last shot. Now the Sadducees thought they had the perfect scheme.

It was based on a provision regarding marriage. It was a law that stipulated if a man was married and died with no children.

His brother was under obligation to marry his widow and have children in his brother's name.

So the question they put before Jesus had the same woman marrying seven different brothers over the time, with all of them finally dying.

They asked Jesus "who's wife would she be in heaven?" The Sadducees envisioned Jesus having a real hard time explain it.

But it wasn't, Jesus answered them; "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead, will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.

They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. Jesus was saying there is no marriage in heaven.

What was the first problem with the Sadducees question? It was based on the belief that heaven would have to be like earth.

The truth is in heaven you won't be married nor have children, but you'll live forever just like the angels."

Now before we get to the main point here, let me just point out that this doesn't mean that you won't know each other.

Abraham and Elijah maintained their identities at the Mount of Transfiguration and were recognized by the disciples who were there.

It just means you won't be married. I don't know what kind of a marriage you have right now. For some, you might say, "thank God!"

Hopefully not. For most Christians that's kind of hard to swallow, that the spouse they have been with for years, even if they are Christian.

And both end up in heaven, will no longer be living as a married couple.

Look the Sadducees were assuming that the principles that govern this life can never change!

And since they didn't want to let go of this life, they denied any life after death.

Let me ask you, what would you miss most in this life if it wasn't in heaven?

You might think of your child, your pet dog, your house, or your job, or your marriage.

If a certain person, friend, relationship, or possession does not end up in heaven, would you still want to be there?

Tough question, maybe! Jesus once said, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."*

The warning from Jesus is the same as it is here. Don't be so attached to your life here that you won't be willing to let go of it.

Imagine if you were dating someone and talking about marriage, but then the person started talking about how much he or she will miss dating and being single.

You would wonder, "how committed is this person to me, if he or she isn't willing to give up his or her old life?"

If you start thinking in terms of what you will miss in heaven, then how committed to God are you, if you aren't willing to give up this life for the next one?

But Jesus doesn't even approach it from that point of view. Instead of focusing on what we won't have from this life.

He encourages us to look forward to heaven by pointing to what we will have.

He says that those believers who are resurrected from the dead will never die. And he explains their relationship in heaven to that of being "God's children."

Think of the whole concept of being a child. When I was a child, I had no responsibilities.

My job was to wake up, play, eat food my parents gave me, and go to bed. Isn't that why we remember things as the "good old days."

It wasn't that the old days were much easier, but that when we were that age we had less responsibility. We knew mom and dad would take care of everything.

We didn't have any worries. Jesus shows this is one reason why heaven will be so great. We'll be like kids again.

We won't have to deal with old age and sickness. We won't have the responsibility of feeding children or appeasing our spouses.

We'll just serve God in an innocent and child like way. There won't be any deadlines or funerals to attend.

Like Isaiah says, with such happiness, former things won't be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

Jesus calls on the world to believe in heaven because it will be completely different from earth.

There was a church that was looking to meet the needs of the local community. So they questioned the community on what they needed.

Come to find out, many young parents were having problems potty training their children.

So they came out with a great way to reach out to the people of their community, they would have a potty training seminar and hire an expert to come to their church.

Now, the only hurdle they had to overcome would be how they would use God's Word to promote their activity.

There are many in this world who think they have a great knowledge of God's Word.

Just because they may have memorized a certain number of passages or read the Bible so many times.

But an even more important concept to Christianity is not just knowing lots of doctrine and Bible passages, but knowing how and when to apply it.

Just because God used to forbid the Israelites from eating pork, it doesn't mean that this law applies today.

Just because Jesus told the rich young man to sell all he had and give it to the poor, it doesn't mean that we all have to do that to get to heaven.

In this case, the Samaritans picked a Levitical Marriage law written in Deuteronomy to make the outrageous claim that there could be no resurrection.

If these men all married the same woman then there couldn't be a resurrection from the dead, because they couldn't all stay married to her.

In this case they picked a law that had nothing to do with life after death and used it to reason out there could be no life after death

What did Jesus do in this case? He said to the Sadducees, But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise.

For he calls the Lord *‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’*

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.” Jesus quoted Exodus chapter three, using a passage that directly talks about life after death.

Note that Jesus also uses reason and deduction, but He based it on passages that were directly relevant to the subject at hand.

God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At this point, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were long dead.

No, what God meant in His statement to Moses was clear. If he called himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Then they must have still been alive in some way, even though they had died.

So Jesus used God’s Word and deducted from it that there was a resurrection, even according to Moses.

This is the only way that we can fight the Sadducees of today, because the same trick is being played by Satan today.

He gets religious groups to use the law to try and negate the gospel and it’s promises.

He’ll use any passage he can find to try and change us from Triumphant Saints into nothing more than terrible sinners.

For instance, God’s law is very clear. It says in Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 5; “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

And in Matthew chapter 22 verse 39 “Love your neighbor as yourself.” From these laws alone I can easily conclude that I have to love God

That I am a sinner, yes I do wrong, and I am guilty of breaking the whole law.

These laws make me feel ugly and filthy, and unrepented they do condemn me to hell.

They put me under God's curse for being too attracted to the things of this world. But that is the purpose of the law.

Paul said in Romans chapter 3 verse 20, "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

But the Gospel declares, now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

The Gospel declares that Jesus has obeyed God's law in your place, suffered in your place, and gave you this forgiveness and holiness through faith in Him.

The role of the Gospel is to take your guilt and your sins and throw them on Jesus, and take Jesus righteousness and holiness and throw it on you.

That's why we call ourselves "saints" and "holy." Not because we are holy, but because God looks at us as holy through the righteousness of Christ.

With the Gospel of Christ, God has taken our dead souls and made them alive in Christ.

Yes the Sadducees tried to say there was no heaven because the law wouldn't allow it. The Sadducees of today do the same thing.

They will whisper in your ear, “how can you call yourself holy? Look at your life! How could you possibly call yourself a saint!

Why, you haven’t lived half the life of Mary, Peter or James! How dare you. And you’ll begin thinking to yourself, “that’s right!

God’s law says I’m nothing but a sinner. Moses condemns me to hell! I’m not worthy of such a place!”

It is at that point that you can tell Moses to go back up to the mountain, for he has done his job.

Now it is time for you to climb up to Mt. Calvary, and listen to the Gospel.

It is at Calvary that Jesus says to you, “I did not come to save those who were healthy, but sinfully sick and dying people.

I came to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Your righteousness has nothing to do with what you have done. Your holiness is only based on my life and death.

I have made you holy because I lived a perfect life in your place. I have taken your sins and guilt on my shoulders at Calvary.

I have washed your sins away at your baptism, and made you my child. I have met Moses’ demands, and now you are holy.”

Jesus was able to prove there is a resurrection and there will be saints in heaven, with a good knowledge of the Scriptures.

My friends our lives in heaven will be nothing like your lives on earth. Thank God for that! No more headaches. No more death. No more sin.

That is the promise of God based on the life and death of Christ. There are saints. And they will live in heaven. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.