



The Living & Loving God

Community Study Guide: Mark 12:18-34 –Week of April 7th, 2024

1. The Living God is the God of the Living

In the ongoing attempt to discredit Jesus, the Sadducees have come to pose a question. The Sadducees were another group of religious elites, who believed that there was no resurrection from the dead. Furthermore, they believed that there was no life after death; and that death was the end. When it was said that God was the God of the living and not the dead, they interpreted that by claiming it proved no life after death. Once more we see people taking the Words of God, claiming them as their own, and misunderstanding those very words. In the passage, the Sadducees attempt to use an unrealistic scenario to present a point that they hope will confound Jesus. They grasp at a portion of God's law for Israel (In that if a man dies without children, his brother must assume the conjugal duties to his deceased brother's wife), and attempt to use this concept to show how resurrection would be absurd. After hearing the scenario presented by the Sadducees, Jesus strongly rebukes them. He points out that they (like the rest of the religious elites) do not know the scripture or the power of God. To refute them, Jesus gives two counterpoints. One point is simply the plain words of scripture. He directs their attention to God's own statements.... That He is the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. God claims these men and refers to them as though they still were. What God says, is. God is not the God of the dead, but those who are alive. Furthermore, Jesus also gives a direct answer to their initial question. The resurrection from the dead will bring about total transformation. The old purpose of our created life will be changed. There will no longer be a command to multiply, and we will no longer be given to marriage to that end. We will be like the angels in this regard.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

Gods power and great gift is His victory over death through the work and resurrection of Jesus. He is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Those who are alive are alive in Christ Jesus. Because of this resurrection, our lives today have meaning and purpose, which is to love God with our entire being, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Heart

We have hope for the future, for victory over death, because of what Jesus has accomplished. Our heart's affections should be set on Him, loving Him with our entire being. Out of our love for Him comes our love for our neighbors.

Hands

Commit yourselves to doing all the Lord has commanded you to do. Love Him with your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength. Do this because all He has done for you. Because He has loved you, also love your neighbor.

2. The Loving God Commands Loving God & Loving Neighbor.

After observing Jesus's interaction with the Sadducees, a scribe comes to Jesus with a question. He asked Jesus which commandment is the most important of all. Jesus's response is not to pick a singular law and elevate it. He tells the scribe the whole law is valuable, and that the heart of it must be kept. Jesus replies that the greatest command is to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Second to this first greatest commandment is the imperative to love your neighbor as you love yourself. It is in this whole unity of obedience does one do the good that God had called them to.

Read Mark 12:18-34

1. Who were the Sadducees? What was distinct regarding their position?
2. What Old Testament practice did the Sadducees bring up? What was the purpose of their line of questioning?
3. **Read Verse 25** What is Jesus revealing to us by this passage? Why is there a change after death? How has this changed your perspective on the matter?
4. **Read Verse 26** How does Jesus disprove the Sadducees' question and position?
5. In verse 28, what is different about the scribe who approaches Jesus? How could this approach be informative for us?
6. Scripture is quite clear on the requirement for us to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. How is this done? How do we obey each of these categories?
7. Are you fulfilling these commands? What do you need to do to love God more? To love your neighbor more?
8. What does Jesus mean when He tells the scribe that that he is not far from the kingdom of God?