

“Don’t Be A Sadducee – HOPE!” Mark 12:18-27 (Mt. 22:23-33; Lk 20:27-40)

**INTRODUCTION**

TODAY we continue our series in the gospel of Mark as we “mark” a special saying of Jesus that relates to us and challenges us in our life. We’ll get to Mark in just a moment.

TODAY we want to think on the greatness of HOPE - HOPE which lifts us out of despair and discouragement – HOPE which gives us anticipation of better things to come and expectation of future joys and victories.

Praise God for HOPE! – in this life and the next. We all desperately need the inner promise of circumstances improving and the expectation of a bright future.

*1 Corinthians 13:12-13 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

I can understand FAITH FOREVER – in God. I can understand LOVE FOREVER – loving God and one another.

But I might wrongly think that HOPE is only until “the end” in heaven, when all shall be known.

But HOPE IS FOREVER. Heaven will not be a boring eternity of singing praises with harps in a never-ending church service. (!) HOPE promises that in heaven there will be anticipation, longings, things to look forward to, excitement, constant newness and freshness. Yes!

TODAY many of us need revitalized HOPE – HOPE for a restored relationship, or HOPE to get out of a wrong relationship; HOPE in the midst of financial chaos, or HOPE out of a debilitating habit; or just HOPE restored for a bright and meaningful future.

The Jewish sect of the Sadducees were those who had no HOPE. For though they were the spiritual rulers of the Jews, including the high priest, amazingly they did not believe in the supernatural – in resurrection, in angels, in spirits or in miracles. They were, as the old memory aid suggests – “sad-you-see” – because they had no HOPE in the supernatural intervention of God.

Let’s now read our Mark text and see what we can learn about HOPE – how to grasp it and how not to miss it!

**THE TEXT**

**The Set Up**

18 And some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Him, and began questioning Him, saying,

19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us *a law* that IF A MAN'S BROTHER DIES and leaves behind a wife AND LEAVES NO CHILD, HIS BROTHER SHOULD TAKE [marry] THE WIFE AND RAISE UP OFFSPRING TO HIS BROTHER. [*Deut. 25:5ff*]

20 "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no offspring.  
[children]

21 "The second one took her, and died leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise;  
22 and so all seven left no offspring. Last of all, the woman died too.

### **The Sadducee's Test Question**

23 "In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."

### **Jesus' Answer – the Power of Resurrection**

24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?

25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

### **Jesus' Answer – the Present Tense of Resurrection**

26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *passage about the burning bush*, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, and the God of Jacob'? [Exodus 3:6]

### **Mark These Words:**

27 He is not *the* God of the dead, but of *the* living; you are greatly mistaken."  
[unique last phrase]

## **Matthew and Luke additions**

Matthew 22:23 "on that day" – i.e. still on Tuesday of Passion Week

22:33 "when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching"

22:34 "...when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence..."

Luke 20:34-38 "the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die any more, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ... for all live to Him"

20: 39-40 And some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." For they did not have courage to question hem any longer about anything.

## **The Sadducees made 2 critical errors in judgment and belief:**

### **1. They made heaven in their image of understanding. THEY LACKED HEAVEN**

We tend to make heaven "in our own image" – to suit ourselves

1. The Red Indians – "happy hunting ground"
2. The Vikings - a Valhalla where they would fight all day and drink all night
3. The Mohammedans (a desert people with luxury unknown) – a heaven with life full of every sensual and bodily pleasure
4. The Jews (who hated the sea) – a heaven with no more sea

5. The Marines – “you will find the streets are guarded by U.S. Marines”

The Sadducees being pragmatists were both practical (“what you see is what you get”) and analytical (“just give me the facts” – in their case the “facts” were the text of the Torah – the Pentateuch). Resurrection made no sense to them because they could not “see” it not (they said) did the Torah teach it.

**2. They failed to understand the eternal nature of God’s relationship with man and those things that would last forever. THEY LACKED HOPE**

*Psalm 73: 23-24 ... I am continually with Thee. Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. With Thy Counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.*

Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees had FAITH – at least faith in God and his law of morality and integrity.

The Pharisees, however were loveless legalists of the Law. They needed to learn that “the greatest ... is LOVE. We must learn and embrace that truth.

The Sadducees, though having a semblance of faith, were hopeless REALISTS. Their hope was only in this life; only in what they could see. Therefore, they could not embrace the glory of heaven or the hope of resurrection.

**TODAY we focus on HOPE in a message entitled “Don’t Be a Sadducee – HOPE!”**

**Gleaning from the TEXT**

**v. 27** The Sadducees had undoubtedly heard of, or saw, the defeat of the Pharisees that day. They wanted to “kill two birds with one stone” in defeating both Jesus and their rival Pharisees with this question about the resurrection.

**v. 28-33** They thought this set up scenario/question about 7 brothers and one wife was perfect to ridicule the concept of resurrection, and thereby ridicule Jesus. This was probably an exaggerated story – improbably, but possible.

The basis for the question came from Deut. 25:5ff (a part of the Scripture they ascribed as Holy) where God made provision for a family name and inheritance to be maintained within the family in case of death. The law begins “when brothers live together” – a part the Sadducees left out and we often forget – a specific provision for the close bond of family community in those days. THIS WAS NOT MEANT TO BE A GENERAL LAW FOR ALL FAMILY – then or today.

Their HOPE was founded on this life alone. **ON WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOUNDED?**

**v. 24-25 THEY WERE MISTAKEN IN THE POWER OF RESURRECTION**

They wrongly understood both (1) the Scriptures and (2) the power of God

1. There is no concept of marriage in heaven as we understand it here – the Scriptures teach that we will be like angels and sons of God (Luke 20) therefore, the Sadducee’s question is meaningless.
2. Their assumption is that if there were a resurrection that things would be much the same – they acknowledge not that God’s ways and thoughts – his power – are far beyond ours (Isaiah 55 – which they don’t regard)

**DON’T BE MISTAKEN** – the Scriptures teach that through the power of God THINGS CAN CHANGE. Our HOPE is built on this.

#### **v. 26 THEY WERE MISTAKEN IN THE PRESENT TENSE OF RESURRECTION**

They wrongly assumed that God WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But the great “I AM” IS the God of all who believe - now

1. All who have died in faith are presently alive with God as their God! - there IS a resurrection from the dead. Jesus makes it clear that this is the interpretation of what God said at the burning bush (a passage in the Torah that the Sadducees accepted) – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were ALIVE – resurrected with God as their present I AM
2. All who are alive in faith now have the resurrection power of God at their disposal – is our present tense God – our I AM

**DON’T BE MISTAKEN** – God is our very present help – GOD’S RESURRECTION POWER IS AVAILABLE NOW

*Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

*Philippians 3:10 ...that I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection*

#### **v. 27 Mark these words of Jesus for you today.**

1. God is the God of the living – He is alive and well and available to help all who call on His resurrection power – whether for salvation or for strength.  
HE IS THE GOD OF HOPE – NOW!
2. You are mistaken if you despair that your circumstance cannot change. God’s resurrection power is available NOW – not just at death.  
HE IS THE GOD OF HOPE – NOW!

### **THE POWER OF HOPE**

1. **It is LIVING** – based on Jesus’ resurrection

*1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

2. **It is SECURE** – founded on God’s promise

*Hebrews 6:18b-19a ...we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast ...*

*Titus 1:2 [we have] the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.*

3. **It is FIXED** – on the grace of God at Jesus’ coming

*1 Peter 1:13 ...gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

4. **It is UPLIFTING** – we grieve not as those who have no hope

*1 Thessalonians 4:13 ...we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.*

5. **It is PURIFYING** – the hope of seeing Jesus keeps us from sin

*1 John 3:2b-3 ...when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

6. **It is JESUS IN US** – our hope of glory is Christ in us

*Colossians 1:27 ...Christ in you, the hope of glory*

FOR WHAT DO YOU NEED HOPE TODAY? FIX YOUR HOPE ON JESUS and the power of His resurrection.