

23S13 Mark 12:18-34 (Part 34) Resurrection Marriage, Greatest Commandment

Hello everyone. I'm Kip and I want to thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 12:18-34 (Part 34) Marriage in the Resurrection and Greatest Commandment.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today.

Let's read Mark 12:18-34 (NAS) ¹⁸*Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying,* ¹⁹*“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and does not leave a child, his brother is to marry the wife and raise up children for his brother.* ²⁰*There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children.* ²¹*The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise;* ²²*and so the seven together left no children. Last of all the woman also died.* ²³*In the resurrection, which one's wife will she be? For each of the seven had her as his wife.”* ²⁴*Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures nor the power of God? ²⁵For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* ²⁶*But regarding the fact that the dead rise, 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, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”* ²⁸*One of the scribes came up and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”* ²⁹*Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; ³⁰AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ ³¹The second is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”* ³²*And the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO OTHER BESIDES HIM; ³³and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.”* ³⁴*When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And then, no one dared any longer to question Him.*

Let's pray. **Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Now, before we take a closer look at scripture, it is important to know a few things about the Sadducees and Jewish tradition in the first century. First, if a man died without children, it was the responsibility of his brother to marry the wife and have children in the name of the dead brother. You can read more about this in Deuteronomy 25. Additionally, in the first century Jewish leadership had to very different groups Pharisees and Sadducees. Without going into the details, Sadducees did not believe in a bodily resurrection. So this question is constructed from that perspective to trap Jesus. Mark 12:18-23 (NAS) *¹⁸Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying, ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves behind a wife and does not leave a child, his brother is to marry the wife and raise up children for his brother. ²⁰There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children. ²¹The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise; ²²and so the seven together left no children. Last of all the woman also died. ²³In the resurrection, which one’s wife will she be? For each of the seven had her as his wife.”*

So, this woman has been married to all seven brothers and all the brothers died, but no children. This is not a problem unless there is a resurrection. But if there is a resurrection then who is the lady's husband.

Next, Mark 12:24-25 (NAS) *²⁴Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures nor the power of God? ²⁵For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

Jesus stomps on that argument. No marriage in the resurrection, so this is a non-issue. But Jesus is not done. Next, Mark 12:26-27 (NAS) *²⁶But regarding the fact that the dead rise, 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, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”*

This is an amazing thing Jesus said. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob are living. Not bodily because their bodies had long died. But they are not dead, or asleep or in limbo, they are living. God is the God of the living, not the dead. This is a great hope for us. This life is not all there is. Jesus is making that very clear to the Sadducees.

Next Mark 12:28 (NAS) *²⁸One of the scribes came up and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”*

This makes me believe the conversation was probably longer than what the Bible records for us. But, now another even harder question. If Jesus chooses one over another, then they can trap him in his words.

Next Mark 12:29-31 (NAS) ²⁹Jesus answered, *“The foremost is, ‘HEAR, ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; ³⁰AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ ³¹The second is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

Love God with all we have and love others at least as much as you love yourself. We know that latter in the gospels Jesus asserts even a higher standard. Jesus tells us we must love others the way He loves them.

Next Mark 12:32-33 (NAS) ³²And the scribe said to Him, *“Well said, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO OTHER BESIDES HIM; ³³and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

I wish we knew more about this scribe. Loving God and our neighbor is more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices. This was a radical thought to the legalistic first century Judaism.

Next Mark 12:34 (NAS) ³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, *“You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And then, no one dared any longer to question Him.*

I struggled with this verse a lot. What does Jesus mean this scribe is “not far from the Kingdom of God”. Jesus has said several times “the kingdom of God is here”. That was the gospel of the kingdom of God, Jesus and his disciples had been preaching. So, how is the scribe not far from the kingdom. Well, one way is this scribe’s understanding is becoming kingdom like. But, why did Jesus not say he was in the kingdom. Well, that is the point. The only way into the kingdom of God is through a belief in Jesus as the king of that kingdom. The scribe was close, but not quite there.

Let’s review.

- 1) Resurrection. The resurrection is a core tenant of our Christian faith. Jesus told us there is a resurrection. Jesus was the first fruits of that resurrection on resurrection Sunday. But even more, those who have died before us are living. God is the God of the living, not the dead.
- 2) Greatest Commandment. God first above everyone and everything. Then a distant second is everyone else. Then a yet further distant third is us. JOY. Jesus first, Others next, you last. Love others the way Jesus loves them.

- 3) Legalism. The scribe says love for others is greater than all offerings and sacrifices. This is true except for the sacrifice of Christ for us. But, this is more about legalism. It is not about following rules or doing this or that. Jesus wants us to care for others, serve others, love others like he loves them.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this today. Love the lord your God with all you have. Your mind, body, soul. Everything you have. Then love others with everything God has given you, the way God wants you to love them.

What does this mean for you? How we treat people matters to God. We can not say we love God, yet not show love to those around us. The people in our life, the difficult people in our life, have been put there by God for us to love. Love is not hugs and kisses. This love is more than that, this love is truly wanting good for the other person. It is praying blessings for the person that hurt us. It is giving help to the person that spoke bad about us. Doing for the people in our lives, what Jesus wants us to do for them.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.