Luke 20:37-38 37“Even Moses showed in the account about the burning bush that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord: ‘The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ 38He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all are alive to him.”

 Again this is such an awesome text. There are really a number of important lessons here, but I think lessons that the majority of people want to ignore. It is a text that gives the children of God wonderful hope and comfort and it is a text that then deals with the problem of fools, godless fools attempting to look and act godly.

 Why do I say that? Because of the question the Sadducee ask Jesus. It is an ingenuous question, but make no mistake. These are not men seeking knowledge or desiring to understand more deeply the Word of God. For that matter, it is rather clear that they don’t even believe the Word of God! Now if you don’t even believe the Word of God then what right do you have to even debate or ask questions about Godly things? It is as clear as can be by your rejection of God’s Word that you care nothing for or about God! And as we grasp this truth of these men, we realize that really not much has changed in the world.

 Why do I say this about the Sadducees? What we know of the Sadducees is rather sad. They were without any doubt, the ruling, aristocrats of the Jewish people. This group, because of their money and their political agenda had control of the Temple, the High Priesthood and the Sanhedrin. They were able to do this because of their religious viewpoint. They were not at all constrained by God’s Word. For that matter, they really didn’t believe God’s Word. As far as the Bible goes, they only accepted the first five books of the Bible as the Word of God. But even when I say they accepted the first five books that too is not really true. They didn’t so much accept it as God’s Word but rather as the foundational tool they would use for their lives. Because they rejected the idea of a resurrection of the dead. That in itself is bad enough but do be aware of the fact that they rejected the idea of spiritual beings, heaven and hell or even a judgement to come. I want you to really contemplate that information for a moment. They rejected the very point of the Jewish faith! But evidently being religious was a highly lucrative deal so they reveled in being morally religious, as long as being moral filled their pockets.

 I need you to think of this. Why, if you don’t believe in the very things that it is clear Jesus teaches and preaches about, why do you come and confront Jesus? There really is only one answer. Because you realize that Jesus is exactly what he has said he is, the Son of God and the Savior from sin, death and the devil. Jesus is here to offer you eternal life and salvation and Jesus stands in direct opposition to everything you have been and are. For the sake of who and what you are, Jesus must go!

 If you would, I would like to just dwell on the lessons, the rather obvious lessons found in this history with the Sadducees. Our theme will be: **GOD OR NOT!**

 We will cover our lessons as points. Point one. If you don’t believe in the resurrection or an afterlife, then why do you even bother to question and attack Jesus? Hypocrisy is the answer. They found value in their hypocrisy. That’s the whole point of hypocrisy. Being a false believer suited their thinking and life. Jesus stood opposed to what they were. They hated Jesus because for the most part they realized that Jesus stood for God’s Word, its truth and its fulfillment. Hypocrisy! I emphasize that because that seems to be the heart and core of the majority of the world. People, lots of people, in the name of religion and God, who work hard to undermine, undercut, and destroy all in the name of religion or God. Dear world, if you don’t want to believe in God fine, teach your garbage and believe what you want but why do you have to destroy my faith and my God and my Savior in the process? As Jesus said, **“If they hated me, they will hate you too!”** Don’t let the hypocrites of the world destroy your faith.

 Point two. To understand this point we actually turn to the parallel account of this history found in Matthew 22. The Matthew text shows the very pointed nature of what Jesus said to them. In Matthew, as Jesus begins his answer he says, **“You are mistaken since you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”** Let those words of Jesus sink in. If you think that you sit as judge over God’s Word, that you get to decide what is true and what is not true then you are in the same boat as these Sadducees. The big problem they had was they did not believe, not in God or his Word, therefore they did not know the Scripture and in rejecting the very Word of God (and let it sink in that at this point we are talking Old Testament here) you therefore do not know and have rejected the very power of God!

 I sorry, who do you think you are? That is what is at stake in every single Church in this world of ours. Are you a church that is going to preach and teach the very truth, the very clear and absolute facts of God’s Word or do you reject it? If clearly God’s Word declares something as a fact: for example, that there is a heaven and hell, two eternal destinations for the souls of mankind to end up at, you have no right to declare that false just because you don’t want to believe it. Make sure you get this! You cannot disregard any portion of God’s Word, Old or New Testament and still be a true believer of God. Because the minute, the very second you decide that you get to determine what is true and what is not you have exalted yourself over God and in doing such have rejected the authority, power, majesty and absolute divinity of God! Again for instance: God says be in Church and you decide you don’t have to be? Isn’t God the one who gave Church? You decide that sexual immorality, idolatry, thievery, greed, drunkenness, slander and swindling is okay? You are just like the Sadducees. You have rejected the truth and very power of God! Please think carefully about what you want to believe. It would not be good to show up before the throne of Jesus and have him say to you, **“You are mistaken.”**

 Point three. Please note that Jesus was a clear and absolute believer in the Word and power of God. Did you catch the lesson he gave them on the wonderful simplicity and awesomeness of God’s Word? **“Moses showed…when he called the Lord: ‘The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all are alive to him.”** Now if you want to, I am sure you can twist and contort the words of Jesus to say whatever you want but it is clear what Jesus is actually saying. Context! The context is the resurrection and the context is the issue of heaven and hell and eternal life. At the time of Moses, some 400 years after Jacob, Moses speaks of these men as living and alive before the Lord. That’s because they are!

 They are with God in heaven. God did not cease to be their God when they died in this world, but rather they entered God’s realm, God’s kingdom, and continue to live. What are you going to do, declare that Jesus was mistaken and wrong about this? Fact is, if you say anything less than what Jesus intended to teach you show your rejection and distrust of Jesus! I am pretty sure that is not a good position to be in. Let me state it clearly. Jesus in these words is affirming the existence of God’s kingdom, the eternal nature of the soul, the reality of eternal life with God and the power and might of God to bring all of this about. Jesus bases all of this on the clear testimony of God’s Word!

 Point four. Jesus knows things that we do not and in this case he shared those things with us. Listen to what he said. **“The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are consider worthy to experience that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. In fact, they cannot die any more, for they are like the angels. They are sons of God, because they are sons of the resurrection.”**

Such powerful and insightful words from Jesus. I will tell you that I believe Jesus is speaking directly from his Godly knowledge and wisdom. He knows what he has just said because He is God! As God, Jesus reveals a few awesome things. Marriage is for this life and world. The issue of marriage is not a thing, not an issue, not a practice of the age to come. Marriage is for this life. And just as a small side remark, think of what this says of those religions who make marriage and sexuality an issue for their concept of heaven? How directly that is opposed to God’s truth!

 Jesus speaks of those “**who are counted worthy.”** Here again is that aorist passive verb. Same lesson as last week. The aorist describes completed action and the passive voice says this is what is done to you not what you have done. You are counted / declared worthy. The only way that happens is because you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior from sin. You believe he is the Lamb of God given for the sin of the world. You believe he holds in His hand the robe of righteousness for you to wear, that simple picture God gives us to help us all the more grasp the forgiveness of sins and with it the eternal life we are given. Here is Jesus, on the verge of bringing to fulfillment the very purpose of his life speaking of that purpose as already a fact and reality. I say that because we know that this history of Jesus and the Sadducees took place on Holy Tuesday, just three days before Jesus is found on the cross paying for our sins. We are only counted worthy in Jesus!

 And the **age** mentioned here can be nothing but the eternal kingdom of God. The text says, **“Those counted worthy to experience that age and the resurrection from the dead.”** There is a resurrection coming. There is an eternal kingdom of God. We know it is eternal because Jesus adds the information: **“In fact, they cannot die any more.”** There are two clear lessons in those words. No longer is physical death going to be a factor in God’s realm. We will have glorified, immortal bodies, holy, pure and awesome forever. We will be in eternity, the eternity of heaven, where the threat and danger of hell and damnation, the real death we are to fear, is gone. We are in eternal life. Revelation 21 puts this wonder this way: **“Look! God’s dwelling is with people. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, because the former things have passed away.”** There is an eternal life and believers will be with the Lord forever.

 Just a small comment on a phrase that so many seem to misunderstand. Jesus makes the statement: **“In fact, they cannot die any more, for they are like the angels.”** There is no passage that proclaims that when we die we become angels, and if you pay attention to this passage you will see it does not teach this falsehood either. It is speaking of the fact that we become immortal beings, that we become beings where neither physical death nor eternal death is a problem for us. That is how we are like the angels. We become immortal beings like the angels of God, holy and perfect and no longer bothered by death in any way.

 And note those last words of Jesus here. **“They are sons of God, because they are sons of the resurrection.”** I will note that if you check the NIV you will find that this passage was translated in this way, **“They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.”** I am going to guess that the translators of the EHV decided to keep the wording of the Greek text here: “sons” because of the societal force and impact of the term son. You are dealing with Greek and Roman culture here. Sons were the ones who were the inheritors of the parents’ estates. In other words, in this sentence the term is not about your gender, but about your legal rights and claims to everything and anything that was of your parents. It is a way of helping us to grasp that everything and anything that is of and from God becomes ours. We are the full inheritors! God graces us with everything in every way, nothing held back!

 Well, that was kind of the long about way. Today is known as the Sunday of Saints Triumphant. We are to take this Sunday and consider what it is to triumph in Christ. Clearly it is not just a promise for this life, that your life will be better and more bearable because of Jesus, but that also we have the promise and the certainty of eternal life and salvation with Jesus. Want to be a saint triumphant? Then don’t be like the Sadducees and reject the plain and clear truths of God. Rather put your hope, your confidence and your certainty of eternal life in heaven into the hands of Jesus. He is God. He tells us there is a resurrection and eternal life. He is worthy of our faith. He is our answer. Amen.