

Title: The Sufficiency of the Word

Scripture: Matthew 22:23-33

Series: The Word of God

1. Introduction:

- a. Can we, as Christians, trust the Bible? Can we believe that Scripture contains all that we need to know God, be saved, and live obedient lives? In other words, are the Scriptures sufficient?
 - b. Our passage opens with a dramatic showdown between Jesus and the Sadducees. Jesus, having confounded the Pharisees in verses 15-22, is now approached by the Sadducees. This was the group of religious leaders that lived libertarian lives.
 - c. The point of contention between both parties was the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Jesus openly taught the resurrection of the dead as a foundational doctrine found in Scripture. The Sadducees denied that such a doctrine could be found in the biblical record.
 - d. The Sadducees disqualified the entirety of the Old Testament except for the Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses). It was their opinion that the Pentateuch did not teach the resurrection doctrine. Therefore this doctrine could not be sustained biblically.
 - e. Jesus uses this occasion to teach the Sadducees and the following crowds that the Scripture contains all that the believer needs to know about both the Christian life and the Christian afterlife.
2. Verses 23-28: A Questioning of the Sufficiency of the Word: The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, (24) saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’ (25) Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. (26) So too the second and third, down to the seventh. (27) After them all, the woman died. (28) In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”
- a. In verse 23, we are told that the Sadducees approached Jesus with the intent of asking a question. This question was meant to show the absurdity of believing in the resurrection of the dead.
 - i. In essence, they wanted to humiliate and discredit Jesus.
 - ii. I want to remind us that the Sadducees studied the Pentateuch with fervency. Therefore they concluded that they knew all that these five books had to say.

1. It is possible to study the Bible with a human lens and miss the truths contained in it.
 - b. In verse 24, the Sadducees bring up the teaching of levirate marriage given by Moses in **Deuteronomy 25:5-6** “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. (6) And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.
 - i. The woman would be taken care of, the dead man’s name would not be forgotten, and the family would stay together.
 - c. Verses 25-27 gives us the particulars of their question. The Sadducees took their example to the extreme. Two husbands would have sufficed, but seven makes the story more interesting and might make belief in the resurrection seem even more absurd.
 - d. In Verse 28, the question/trap is posed. Whose wife is she in the resurrection?
 - i. They say, think about it: when the dead arises, this woman will have seven husbands! Of course, that cannot, must not, be. She is allowed to have only one, but which one?
 - ii. With this, the Sadducees believe that they have trapped Jesus. Their unbelief in Scripture and the sufficiency of Scripture come to bear. To them, Scripture is just a means to rationalize their lifestyles, but they have no genuine love for God or His Word.
 1. Notice with what wicked purpose they used Scripture against Jesus.
3. Verse 29: True Biblical Knowledge Keeps Us from Error: But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.
- a. **But Jesus answered them:** I draw your attention, dear Christian, to the fact that Jesus answered them. Jesus, the Word of God incarnate, answered their unanswerable question. Jesus does so by turning to the written Word itself.
 - i. What incredible wisdom is found in the Word of God? The answers to every one of life’s questions are located in the Word of God.

- b. **“You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God:**
 - i. **Wrong:** The first thing that Jesus declares is that they were **wrong**. It is not fashionable or politically correct in our culture to say to someone that they are wrong. It is not acceptable to say that someone is wrong about spiritual matters. We are told that we must accept everyone’s viewpoint as real to them. Christ does not do so! Christ clearly and with great love declares to these men that they were wrong.
 - 1. This, to the ear of the Sadducee, must have been hugely offensive. But it was true. For all their study, they were wrong! Their biblical errors put them in grave spiritual danger!
 - a. They were wrong in how and why they came to Jesus.
 - b. They were wrong in denying the resurrection of the dead.
 - c. They were wrong in believing that this life is all there is.
 - d. They were wrong in believing that there would be no consequence for sin.
 - ii. And as far as men live apart from the Word of God, they will always be wrong! They will be wrong in all of their thinking and doing.
 - 1. **Proverbs 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...
 - c. The first thing that made them wrong was the fact that they did not **know the Scriptures:**
 - i. Had they known the Scriptures, they would have known that there is nothing in Deuteronomy 25:5-6 that makes it applicable to eternity. These verses dealt with the marriage relationship on earth. Their hermeneutic was wrong.
 - ii. With this statement, Jesus teaches the sufficiency of Scripture. Jesus plainly states that not knowing the Scriptures will always lead humankind into error. Apart from the Word of God, we will think wrong, believe wrong, and act wrong!
 - 1. True spiritual wisdom, discernment is found only in the proper knowledge of the Scriptures

- iii. This is why it is so imperative for us to find our delight in His Word. We must ask God for the truth that is found in His Word alone. Where else can we go to approach the mind of God?
 - 1. **Psalms 119:105** Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
 - iv. Not knowing the scriptures leads into error in all fronts:
 - 1. Spiritually
 - 2. Physically
 - 3. Emotionally
 - v. Any person without accurate knowledge of the Word will lead a life of error and sin. He or she can never be right before God.
 - d. The second thing that made them wrong was the fact that they did not **know the power of God**:
 - i. The Sadducees with earthly wisdom could not understand the power of God that is presented in His Word. They could not fathom life after death, eternity, forgiveness, repentance, sanctification, justification, and so forth.
 - 1. Had they recognized the power of God, they would have understood that God is able to raise the dead in such a way that marriage will no longer be needed.
 - 2. This power of God is spiritual wisdom.
4. Verse 30: The Word Teaches Us: For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
- a. The glorious resurrection body is going to be immortal. Since there will be no death, the race will not have to be reproduced. Marriage, accordingly, will be a matter of the past. Because there will be no need for marriage, the saints will resemble the angels.
 - b. What excellent teaching is found in the Word of God?
 - i. We find in the Word of God the truth of the present age and the glory of the coming period. We, as the church, will be wed to Christ alone!
5. Verse 31 to 32 – All of Scripture is Sufficient: And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: (32) ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”
- a. **And as for the resurrection of the dead:**

- i. Although the Sadducees ridiculed a beautiful truth taught by Scripture and Christ Himself, Jesus does not refuse to impart needed instruction to them on this very subject.
- b. **Have you not read what was said to you by God:**
 - i. They had read but not with spiritual eyes. They had read the Bible as dead men. They had read the Bible with all their presuppositions and filters.
 - ii. They had read Scripture to justify their beliefs instead of seeking spiritual wisdom that leads to God through His Son.
 - 1. Oh, beloved! How many people commit this very same error?
 - iii. They did not read Scripture humbly and with fear.
 - 1. Here we have a book that transcends time and space.
 - 2. We have a book that is God’s revelation of Himself.
 - 3. God has condescended to make Himself known through His Word.
 - iv. The Scriptures are **God’s** voice:
 - a. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
 - b. Scripture is sufficient!
- c. What did God say in the Pentateuch that they had ignored because of their presuppositions? God had said, **“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”**
 - i. The Sadducees professed themselves to be bound by the Pentateuch and to have searched in vain for evidence of the resurrection.
 - ii. Can you imagine how greatly surprised they were when Jesus proved human immortality from the book of Exodus, the Pentateuch? He showed them that “at the Bush,” the voice of God confirmed the reality of eternal life.
 - iii. How excellent and sufficient is the Word of God? See it here, Beloved. Jesus proves the entire doctrine of the resurrection of the dead by one verb tense. This is how complete the Word is. Every part of it, down to the verb tense is correct.
 - 1. **Exodus 3:6** And he said, “**I am** the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of

Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

- a. The great God would never have spoken of Himself as the God of the patriarchs, centuries after they had died unless they had been living in Him still. It was sure that they were all alive; otherwise, God would have said, “I was their God.”
 - d. Jesus declares the following truth about the Father. **He is not God of the dead, but of the living:**
 - i. The truth of this was always present in the Word of God. The Sadducees had never come to the Word to be instructed.
6. Verse 33: True Scriptural Understanding is Astonishing: And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.
- a. The people were filled with awe and wonder. They knew that Jesus had again triumphed gloriously over his opponents by appropriately expounding the Word of God.
7. Application: The Word of God is enough. Any thoughts or imaginations that men might have outside of His Word are dangerous and deceitful. Beloved, trust in the sufficiency of the Word.
- a. **Proverbs 30:5-6** Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (6) Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
 - b. **Psalms 119:89** Forever, O LORD, your Word is firmly fixed in the heavens.
8. Benediction:
- a. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Public Reading of Scripture: **2 Timothy 3:10-17**