

Built above the cliffs at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane, is a very flash looking building, with a spire reaching up to the air, and on top of that spire, is a golden statue of a figure blowing a trumpet – I think the Mormons believe it's the Angel, Moroni ... This building, is a Mormon Temple – It's a temple of a cult that like to be known as the Church of Latter Day Saints...

I remember seeing it on the news, when this temple was opened (2003)... And, that was a very big deal for the Mormons – to have a specially dedicated temple, rather than just ordinary churches...

Do you know why? It's because Mormons believe, that if they get married in a Mormon temple, their marriage is eternal (celestial marriage) – it carries on into eternity... But if you just get married at an ordinary place of worship, when one of you die, that's the end of the marriage...ⁱ

But what does the Bible have to say about this??? It's not only Mormons who have whacky ideas about marriage and the after-life. Many **Christians** have completely unbiblical views of marriage, and the place of marriage in eternity...

So today, we're going to learn a little bit about marriage, but the main lesson, is going to be about the power of God, and how the Scriptures come to life, when we understand the Power of God.

But before we begin, let's pray:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your word,
We acknowledge Your power,

And we rejoice that, in Your power,
You achieve all that Your word reveals.

Lord, as we study Your word today,
Help us to receive Your word.

Lord, remove from our thoughts and from our
memory-banks,

All that is contrary to Your word,

And fill us with the Knowledge of Your glorious
promise and truth,

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Righto, today the Sadducees make their first and only
appearance in the Gospel of Mark...

We've encountered the **Pharisees** a fair bit; We've heard
about the Scribes, and maybe some of the Scribes were also
Sadducees (we don't know)...

I remember when I was a child, one of our ministers taught us
a little trick, about how to remember the difference between
the Pharisees and the Sadducees:

*The Pharisees believed in the resurrection (life after
death). The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection,
and so they were sad, you see...*

Righto, so let me explain some basic differences between the
Pharisees and the Sadducees:

- The Pharisees were a lay movement – they were rarely (if ever) priests.
- Whereas the Sadducees came mostly from priestly families, and so they were dominant in the Sanhedrin (we might think of the Sanhedrin as the religious council [religious court]) They're the ones who convicted Jesus.

When it came to the Spirit-world

- the **Pharisees** believed in the existence of spiritual beings like Angels;
- The Sadducees did not

When it came to life after death

- The Pharisees believed in the Resurrection
- The Sadducees didn't, and so they were sad, you see.

And the reason why the Sadducees **didn't** believe in the resurrection, probably had something to do with the fact that they only really studied the first 5 books of the Bible – (Book of the Law), or theologians today would call “The Pentateuch” (Gen; Ex; Lev; Num; Deut)... They saw those 5 books as ‘authoritative’, and the rest ‘not so much’.

Whereas the Pharisees gave authority to what we have as the whole of our Old Testament, plus a bit more...

And in the first 5 books of the Bible, it doesn't really develop a lot, the concept of resurrection, like some of the prophets and later books do... And so that's why the Pharisees were all for it, and the Sadducees weren't convinced...

Anyway, the Sadducees didn't think much about this Jesus bloke – Jesus had already predicted His resurrection 3 times, so Jesus was clearly on the side of the Pharisees (on this one)... And so they come to Jesus with a curly question, to try and demonstrate the absurdity of the whole concept of “resurrection”.

So, being big on the first 5 books of the Bible, that's where they went:

In Deuteronomy 25, there's an obscure law, designed to make a person's family line, live on. It's about keeping the inheritance in the family, and about perpetuating that family line:

Deuteronomy 25:5 “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.

⁷ And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.'
⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to

take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.'

Apparently to have your sandal pulled off, was an insult, branding you as somebody who didn't step up to his duties...

Anyway, the Sadducees had this law in mind, and they said: ¹⁹ "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now at this point, many of us are probably going "ouww"...

And my sister-in-law is probably breathing a sigh of relief that my brother has already given her 2 sons, so if he dies, "Pheww! Thank Goodness I don't have to marry his brother."

And obviously back then people went "Ouww" as well, because there's an allowance for when they go "Ouww"...

But they went on to say, "But we know a case where: ²⁰ There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. ²¹ And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring.

And then the third and the fourth, and eventually all 7 brothers had been married to her and died...

I reckon by the time we got to brother No.3, I'd be checking the cupboard for arsenic, wouldn't you???

Last of all the woman also died.

And then they asked the question,

²³ In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?

Alright, she's been married to 7 different men – whose wife is she going to be... Now, obviously it doesn't even need to apply to that law... The same logic applies, to any widow who re-marries – Whose wife is she going to be???

And Jesus' answer to them, is quite cutting...

He quite openly tells them, “You're wrong!”... In fact, He does it twice. V24 **“Is this not the reason you are wrong**

And then again in V27 **You are quite wrong.**

The Greek there, is πολὺ (poly) πλανᾶσθε (planasthe) meaning “many delusion” “many wandering” – you are **very wrong.**

You know, it gets ingrained into us today, that we're not allowed to tell someone that they're wrong... It's offensive – that's thinking that you have all the answers and they don't know...” You can't tell someone that they're wrong , because

they just understand things a bit different to you... But you know what??? That's a nonsense...

There are people who have really whacky religious beliefs, that quite frankly, they just need to be told by biblical teachers, "You're **wrong**" "In fact, you're **very wrong**"... "You may very well **believe** what you believe, but that doesn't make it right..." You're very wrong...

Why were they wrong?

- They didn't know the Scriptures; and
- They didn't know the Power of God...

And therein lies, **most** of the error that we find in the Christian church today...

I'm no longer surprised, but I am very saddened, at how biblically illiterate, many in the church are... And when false teachers come into the church and begin to teach error in the church, there are so many people who don't recognise it as error, because they don't know the truth... Why don't they know the truth? Because they don't know the Scriptures...

The Sadducees didn't know the Scriptures... They ignored whole blocks of Scripture, and even in the bits they did read (first 5 books), they still only saw what they wanted to see...

And that's the way a lot of people work today:

- If this person that I follow, believes this, then that's what I believe...

- And this belief, is the popular belief – everybody seems to believe it, and therefore it must be right.
- Or, if a certain idea about God; or salvation; or a certain teaching, gets presented as ‘a critical and unquestionable doctrine’, then when I read the Scriptures, I filter everything else out, because it doesn’t line up with what I understand to be an unquestionable doctrine...
- Or if I have a particular world-view, when I read the Scriptures, I filter everything else out, because it doesn’t line up with my world view...

My prayer for this church of Bush Disciples, and my prayer for everyone who’s listening to this message today, is that you would **not** become someone who filters **out** what you read in the Bible, because it doesn’t line up with what you feel or believe, or because it doesn’t line up with what your preacher said...

You know what??? Your preacher isn’t infallible, and neither are you... You and I – we all need to be studying the Scriptures – we need to know the Scriptures. Why? So that we will know the truth. And when we know the truth, we can recognise error. And if you ever hear me say something that doesn’t line up with the Scriptures, guess who’s wrong.... It’s not your Bible...

The second reason they were wrong, is because they didn’t know the power of God.

Years ago when I was a candidate to train for the ministry, one of the other candidates, (a young lady) shared her story about how (at one time) she didn't think she could ever be considered for the ministry because she couldn't believe all the stuff that was in the creeds of the church – you know, some of the supernatural stuff, like:

- *the virgin birth;*
- *resurrection of Jesus; and*
- *a few other things like that...*

*But then she went on to tell us how another minister who'd studied pretty high-up in theology, was able to explain to her, that she didn't **need** to believe stuff like that. And he explained how the Creeds (like the Bible) are just a product of their time and people back then just didn't know any better...*

And she told us all this, and I think that in her mind, she believed she was sharing something with us that we'd all known for years, and that we'd all cheer her on and pat her on the back for coming out of the dark-ages... But we didn't. We were dumbfounded... Yeah, right.... What do you do with that???

Now for me, that was the very first personal encounter that I'd had, with that sort of thinking. But over the next couple of decades, I've come across it a lot....

And that sort of thinking, comes from people who neither know the Scriptures (or if they do know them, they reject them, and try to discount what they say, or twist what they say, to make them say something else..)

But I think more tellingly is, they don't know the power of God... They don't know the power of God, and so how could they be expected to believe, what's physically impossible???

And when you take this line of thinking to the extreme, you come to what's called progressive Christianity (at least that's what they like to call themselves – I don't think there's anything progressive about it at all)... But essentially, what progressive Christianity does, is it empties the gospel, and it actually strips God, of all supernatural power and being.

It doesn't believe in :

- angels or demons
- God has any supernatural power
- Miracles
- In fact, they don't even believe that God is a real personal being we have a personal relationship with

I'm not really sure what progressive Christianity **does** believe – but there's lots of stuff that it doesn't.

They don't know, and they don't accept, the power of God. They are focused on the physical world, and fail to grasp the Spiritual reality... They haven't experienced the **power** of God

- Why do people have trouble believing in Creation? Because they don't know the power of God.
- Why do people have trouble believing in the virgin birth? It's because they don't know the power of God... That's easy for God...

- Why don't people believe in the resurrection? It's because they don't believe God has the power to do it...
- Why don't people believe in angels or demons? It's because they don't believe the Scriptures – they don't believe in spiritual powers greater than themselves.
- Why don't people believe in Hell? It's because it goes against their sensibilities, and they don't want to see it in the Scriptures...

They **know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God**

Many people are not saved, because they don't know the Saving loving Heavenly Father, who Reveals Himself in the Scriptures, and they don't know the power of God **to** save...

Anyway, let's come back to the Sadducees:

The reason **they** were wrong, is because they didn't know the Scriptures, and they didn't know the Power of God.

Being raised from the dead, isn't a matter of human potential – it's not within the capacity of **any** human to either be raised from the dead, **or** to be able to raise anybody **else** from the dead. This is something that's entirely in the domain of God.

In our culture,, well actually, let's expand that – across the cultures of the world, across the globe, there are many, many different beliefs about the after-life. Some of them are based on Satanic lies. Most of them are simply based on wishful thinking... And many people are expecting that they're going

to get to enjoy some kind of wonderful, blissful afterlife...
And yet they have this expectation based on 'nothing'...

They don't acknowledge God; They don't worship God;
They don't honour God.... And yet the Lord our God, is the
only one who has the power to raise the dead.

He will raise some to judgment and punishment; and He'll
raise some to eternal life...

But what's the resurrection going to be like? Well, the
question that the Sadducees asked, was based on the premise
that resurrection life, was pretty-much the same as normal life,
only longer...

But Jesus knocked that presumption on the head...

The resurrected life, isn't going to be the same – it's going to
be different... Same Same isn't better, is it...

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

Now, some of you might be quite distressed by that
statement...

Your experience of married life has been so satisfying, and the
love that you have for your husband or your wife, is so strong,
you can't possibly picture joy without being married to
them...

And sometimes, when a person's spouse dies, they look forward to when they'll be back together again (in Glory), and they picture, once again, a married relationship – husband and wife, enjoying the company of each other...

Now, I don't doubt that in Glory, we will recognise those whom we love, and we will know them,, But our relationship's going to be different... Your husband or your wife, will not be:

- central to your existence;
- centre of your satisfaction;
- focus of your affection...

Do you know who's going to be the centre of our worship and adoration??? Our Lord Jesus Christ...

But the Sadducees, they couldn't see with spiritual eyes... They didn't even believe in Angels – how could they possibly begin to grasp, 'things of the Spirit', and what God's glorious Kingdom is going to be like....

They couldn't even see the reality of eternity, in the 5 books of the Bible they did study.

Jesus said, what about at the burning bush (that's in the writings of Moses – they'd read that one): Didn't God say: **'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' 27 He is not God of the dead, but of the living.**

Eternal life, has already begun. Our God is the God of the living. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we've been saved to eternal life... (and that begins now)...

Now, I said at the beginning, the main lesson today, was going to be about the power of God, and how the Scriptures come to life, when we understand the Power of God.

Some people read the Scriptures, and they just don't get it. They don't 'get it', because they can't grasp the Power of God... Their mindset is so restricted to our human physical limitations, and the limitations of the natural world in which we live, and so they read something in the Bible, and they just totally discount it, because they see it as an impossibility...

You know, if we took everything that's a physical or scientific impossibility out of the Scriptures, there wouldn't be much of it left... And it's only when we actually start to recognise the power of God, that it actually begins to make sense...

Without the Power of God, what are we left with???

- Fairy-tales
- Fables
- Fiction;
- Allegories;
- Moralistic teaching...

It's all pretty empty and worthless isn't it...

Is it something we'd stake our whole life upon???

Nup... But add the power of God, and that changes everything. I'd stake my life on that.

But then there's others, who **focus** on the Power of God, and they're very aware of the power of God, but they don't know the Scriptures... And they act as if the Power of God is something that's at **their** disposal, to make **their** life wonderful, and then they wonder why things don't work out as they expected...

Yes, they know God is powerful, but they:

- don't know God;
- They don't know God's will;
- They don't know God's heart; and
- they don't know God's purpose,

because they don't know the Scriptures...

The Scriptures come to life, when we understand the Power of God... All of a sudden, it means something...

The Scriptures make sense when we understand that God has the power:

- To love like you've never been love before;
- Forgive the grossest of sins;
- Transform – to take a broken life and make it new;

- Change a heart – to take it from being bound by evil to being a heart of righteousness and love
- condemn evil and to reward the righteous
- Raise to new life – in this life
- Raise to eternal life...

The scriptures reveal so much about God's will; God's purpose; and God's calling... But they only come to life when we know the **power** of God...

Questions:

ⁱ *“While we recognize civil marriages performed by ministers of other churches and civil marriages performed by officers of the law or others legally qualified to perform them, we believe that only in a temple of God can a marriage for time and eternity be performed, and then only by one having the authority which Christ gave to Peter when he said: “... whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ...”” at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1972/01/the-lds-concept-of-marriage?lang=eng>*