

The God of the Living

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- [0 : 0 0] If you'll please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew. We're looking today at the 22nd chapter, so Matthew 22. Today we're looking at verses 23 through 33.
- So Matthew 22, if you'll read with me, we'll begin in verse 23. The same day Sadducees came to him who say that there is no resurrection.
- And they asked him a question, saying, Teacher, Moses said if a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.
- Now, there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring, left his wife to the brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh.
- After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her. But Jesus answered them, You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.
- [1 : 2 5] For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God?
- I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the crowds heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.
- Let's pray together. Lord, we pray that we would share some of the response of the crowds. That we might be astonished at the teaching of your word.
- That our hearts would respond to that teaching in praise and worship of you. And Lord, if we're to do that, it needs to be, much as it was in this situation, the words of God himself and not of man. And so we ask that your spirit would speak through your messenger, that you might be glorified in the preaching of your word today.
- We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Now you may remember where we were last time in Matthew. We had seen before that there was this question about paying taxes to Caesar.
- [2 : 3 0] And I bring that up because we see that in verse 23, it's the same day. So we have now the same day, but a different group coming to ask Jesus questions. Before it's the Pharisees and the Herodians.
- Now we see the Sadducees coming. And the scripture tell us plainly about the Sadducees, that they were those who did not believe in the resurrection. In Acts 23, verse 8, we read, For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection.
- And it goes on and tells us, Nor angel, nor spirit. But the Pharisees acknowledge them all. So we have a different group, different beliefs. Here in our passage, it tells us in verse 23, that they say there's no resurrection.
- Acts 23 adds, They don't believe in angels or spirits at all. I once had a student when I taught Bible in a Christian school, who was trying to remember the difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

And he said, Sadducees are sad, you see, because they believe in the resurrection. Now I know that's a little childish, but my guess is, it stuck with me, my guess is it will stick with you from here on out, but just as we remember who the Sadducees were, it fits in our English language at least, that they were sad, you see, because they believed in no resurrection.

[3 : 44] Now what does that entail then, if they believe in no resurrection? Well, no resurrection, they also believe there's no future state. It's what we might call soul annihilation. They believe when a person dies, that the soul and the body are so uniquely linked together, that when the body dies, the soul dies with it.

There's no continuing existence of the soul whatsoever. That also would imply no future judgment, and no heaven, and no hell.

But they also believed that there were no angels of spirit, so there's no spiritual beings apart from God himself. And so we get a sense of who the Sadducees were and what they believed.

In some way, they would be those who would proclaim to follow God, but they are denying vast portions of what God's word is taught, as Jesus later affirms. Later, Paul addresses some who hold to a similar teaching, even within the church in Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 15, 12, Paul says, Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? And so we think of the Sadducees holding this view, and maybe we think it's pretty obscure.

[4 : 52] But even within the early church, there were some in the church in Corinth, at least, who said that they believed in Jesus' resurrection, but they denied a resurrection in general. Paul says, That's inconsistent.

How can you hold? There's no resurrection when Jesus could be resurrected, or Jesus is resurrected. Now I think as we look at their question, that their question is partly in ridicule of the doctrine of resurrection.

They're making fun of it. I believe, at least, as I look at their question. You can understand this. Sometimes when we have someone who holds a view differing from us, sometimes our approach is we want to show them how absurd their view is.

So we give them a scenario. We present something that they see. It's really ridiculous that you would hold to these kinds of beliefs. In Sunday school, it was mentioned us living in postmodern times.

I remembered presenting to someone who was a postmodernist. Postmodernists believe there's no absolute truth. I said, Now, is that a true statement or a false statement? You're telling me there's no absolute truth.

[5 : 57] Is that an absolute truth? Because if so, that's self-contradict. I mean, sometimes we do that. We ask questions like that to show how absurd it is to hold such positions. You can't hold that there's no absolute truth. To hold that there's no absolute truth is to state an absolute truth.

And so I think that the Sadducees are doing something of that nature to Jesus as they ask this question. They want to prove their view correct by asking Jesus a question.

And therefore, really showing Jesus' view of the resurrection to be false, and the resurrection of many in that day. So they propose this bizarre question. What I want us to do today is to look first at the resurrection, first, excuse me, at marriage, and how their question speaks to marriage, and how Jesus answers about marriage.

What does this teach us about marriage? And especially in relation to the resurrection. And then secondly, I want us to look at what it says about God. And really, that's what I focus our message on in terms of my title, is the God of the living.

What does that mean, that God is the God of the living? And what does, what it says here about the resurrection teach us about God, and what we should believe about God. So first look at marriage. They propose this really bizarre scenario, I think, to attempt to prove their point, and again, to, I think, ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection.

[7 : 14] It actually says in verse 25, now there were seven brothers among us. There's some debate, was this an actual scenario? You understand the odds of this actually happening are quite rare.

There being seven brothers, each one of them dying off before the wife, who eventually passes. Now, I've heard stories, some of you probably have watched lifetime movies like this, right? There's this woman who's killing off her husband, husband after husband, she's getting the inheritance.

And it's, assuming that this isn't the scenario, that this woman's killed off seven husbands, and hasn't been caught, this is a little bit bizarre. The brothers all die in exactly chronological order. They all die only after they happen to marry the same woman.

And they all die before the woman passes away. So, I think it's pretty safe to say that this probably isn't a scenario that they're aware of, that they're throwing out a potential scenario.

And, as I've already stated, there's, it's quite bizarre. It's not one that seems very likely to happen in real life. But, strictly speaking, in accordance with the law of Moses, this is what would have to happen if such a scenario were to take place.

[8 : 22] So, so they assume the resurrection is a return to things as they were. Now, this is part of the problem of their understanding of the resurrection.

They view it as a return to this life. I thought maybe the best way to present it in our day and age would be, if you think of someone who, maybe if we even said medically speaking, who had passed away, who were, they were able to resuscitate him.

He would return to this life just as things were. Right? Things would continue on in this life. And, it seems as though the Sadducees are viewing the resurrection in such a way that we're just going to return to life as it is.

And so, if there's a resurrection, and all seven brothers come back, and the wife comes back, there's going to be a big fight, isn't there? A family feud. Which one of us gets to marry our wife again?

Which one of us gets to be her husband? Because it'd be wrong to have polygamy. So, how do we decide who gets to be married to her? So, really, they're viewing the resurrection as if it were a physical resurrection in this time, in the current age as we might view it.

[9 : 28] And the scenario may seem strange to us, but as I said, it does follow at least how God has presented his law to Israel that we see, for example, 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 into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. So, that was the law. The law specifically had to do with the idea of property, property, and the property was given to the 12 tribes, divided up really to 11, 10 and two half tribes.

But, the property in Israel was divided up amongst the tribes, and it was to pass on perpetually to stay in those tribes. And so, the idea of a family who lost a husband, if she were to marry someone who was from a different tribe, or even a different family, that land would pass on to a different family.

So, how do we keep the inheritance within a family? Well, there's laws to govern that. Now, that's civil law that isn't a continuing law and regulation for our time. It's also not how we really view property and think of property.

We sell real estate all the time. We don't have a problem with someone outside of our family buying a real estate property. And so, it was a law specific for that time. We actually see this principle lived out, as it were, in the book of Ruth.

[10:54] So, for example, Ruth 4, 5. Then Boaz said, the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.

So, by buying the property, he was, as it were, he was to marry Ruth, and to continue perpetually the line there. So, by the law, this scenario that they present is a possibility, and they're strictly following the law here in this scenario and presenting it.

For us, this would be really strange. In fact, the very idea of someone passing away, and then the brother marrying his sister-in-law, even that seems a little odd to us.

But for it to happen seven times would be really weird in our day and age. But legally speaking, it was something that could potentially have happened in Israel. And so they present this scenario, and we see Jesus' response.

Look at verse 29. But Jesus answered them, you are wrong. Now, I mentioned earlier post-modernity, the denial of absolute truth.

[12:06] And because that has been so promoted in our culture, the idea of calling anyone wrong today is not really politically correct anymore, is it? You're not supposed to tell people they're wrong. You're supposed to tell them, well, that view's good for you, but it's not good for me.

So, let me just note that Jesus doesn't say, well, it's okay for you to believe that there's no resurrection, but I believe there is one. Jesus says, you're wrong. And there's a reason why they're wrong.

But to deny the resurrection is wrong. It's just simple as that. Like, we can't go on today denying the resurrection. Jesus has stated, God's word affirms that this is wrong.

And Jesus specifies why it's wrong in verse 29 as well. Because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For now, I want to put off our consideration of them not knowing the power of God.

To our second point, where we look at the character of God and how, what's revealed to us in this passage about God. For now, let me just talk about the fact that they say, or Jesus says, they know not the scriptures.

[13:10] Jesus may be speaking generally of ignorance of the scripture here. They don't really know what the scripture says. Not everything about our future state has been revealed to us.

We don't know everything that's going to be happening for us in the resurrection, what everything's going to be like. But much has been revealed to us. And I think we have here in this passage, an indication that God's expectation for us is to be familiar with what God has revealed.

There are matters God hasn't revealed that we can try to look into, but we may never understand. And at some point we have to say, I can look no further. We can't go any further. There are things about the resurrection even, our future state, that we don't know what it's going to be like.

But I see here an encouragement for us that we are to search the scriptures, to know the word of God, and to understand what has been revealed to us.

And Jesus is making clear what has been revealed at the very least is that there is a resurrection. There is a future state for all of us, whether that be heaven or hell. But all of us is a future state, and we ought to know what that state's going to be like.

[14 : 13] And I think we can say there is much more that's revealed to us in the scripture. So scripture is clear that the soul is immortal, and will continue on forever, either in heaven or hell.

That much is clear. So for them to deny the resurrection means they don't know God's word. They don't know the scripture. Later in 1 Corinthians 15, I mentioned that earlier, we'll come back to 1 Corinthians 15 again, because it deals much with the resurrection.

But Paul argues that Christ was resurrected in accordance with the Old Testament scriptures. So, for these people to say, the Sadducees to say, there's no resurrection, means that they're ignorant not just of the doctrine itself, but of what it says of Jesus Christ, that he would be resurrected.

So Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3, For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

So Paul argues even the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was foretold in the Old Testament scriptures. So if you're denying a resurrection, you haven't understood even what's told of the Messiah.

[15 : 27] But likewise, we have in Daniel 12, 2, where we read, And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt.

So Daniel 2, 2 mentions specifically a resurrection of the dead. And of course we know Job, what Job says in 19:26, he says, And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.

Obviously to see God in the flesh speaks of a resurrection, not just a spiritual resurrection, but ultimately a resurrection of a body. And we know from God's word, a glorified body. So when Jesus says, you don't know the scriptures, I think there's an obvious way that he's speaking of they're ignorant of the scripture.

The scripture that answers this question that you haven't considered. But we have to consider as well that there may be here a lack of understanding of the scripture. There's ways in which we can read the scripture and never come to an understanding.

1 Corinthians 2, 14 says, The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him. And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

[16 : 37] And so there are things that are spiritually discerned that perhaps they're not getting it because they don't have the Spirit of God. They're not saved. Maybe there's an extent to which both these things are true.

They don't know the passages that speak so clearly of the resurrection and then what they do see they don't understand because they don't have the spiritual ability to understand it. And then Jesus goes on and he begins to teach them.

He says, by summary, he says, In eternity there will be no marriage. Look at verse 30 there. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.

So in eternity there will be no marriage. Now again, I think what Jesus says of the Sadducees could be true of us that there may be some of us who didn't realize that was in the Word of God.

I hear people oftentimes talk about when they get to heaven and seeing their husband or their wife. This isn't denying that you'll see them. It is denying that you'll be married to them in heaven and hell.

[17 : 45] So why is that? It's clearly stated there's no marriage in heaven. So in eternity you won't have a husband or you won't have a wife. There will be no marriage. There won't be the family dynamics that we know here that we experience.

Why? Well, the major reason for this and I think this is the overarching point and that we need to get this is that marriage is a shadow.

Marriage is a type of an anti-type. Marriage is a shadow of a greater reality. So God being gracious, God being good to us wanted us to understand something and so he gave us marriage that we might taste of that something and get an idea of it.

Now, there are some areas in which I think we get this really clearly, right? Take, for example, the Old Testament sacrifices and the feasts and the festivals that the Old Testament people of Israel celebrated.

I think we get that those things were shadows that pointed to Christ. For example, the Passover. They celebrated the Passover lamb where this lamb would take upon itself the sins of God's people.

[18 : 56] Now, we understand, right, that it wasn't really about the lamb, was it? What was the Passover lamb about? The Paschal, the Passover lamb of God who would take upon himself the sins of the world.

So the lamb of God pointed to Jesus Christ. And so, now we understand this, right, that if one of us today said, hey, let's celebrate the Passover and we're going to have a Passover lamb and we're going to put our sins on it.

There's a problem, isn't there? Why? Because that's the shadow and we have already been given the reality of Jesus Christ on the cross and so we go to Christ. We don't go to the lamb.

Does that make sense? I think we get that. And so, I know it may be hard for some of us because God's blessed us with good marriages and it seems like we want to be married but what I'm saying is marriage has been given to us because it's a shadow of a greater reality and what is that greater reality?

Before I reveal it, let me just read God's word that I think speaks to that and then we'll point it more clearly. Ephesians 5, 25-32 Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

[20 : 21] In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself for no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

So, in this passage, Paul gives us this comparison of Christ's love for the church compared to a husband's love for his wife and in verse 31 he says, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.

Therefore, here's the reason why marriage exists because there's already a greater reality that marriage is meant to point us to. Christ and the church. And then he goes on to reiterate that in verse 32.

This mystery is profound and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church. So, why does marriage exist? Because of the Christian's union with Christ.

[21 : 34] God, in his love and his sovereign purposes united the Christian to Christ Jesus. And that union is mystical so that we don't experience it in the full here in this life.

But there's coming a day in the resurrection where we will dwell forever in the presence of God united to Jesus Christ enjoying his presence forever.

And so God, not as though he had to sit and contemplate this, but if you can bear with me, God, how can I communicate that to man? How can I let man begin to taste how sweet our union with Christ is?

How give them marriage? And so God gave us marriage that we might know joy in more intense ways than any other aspects of our human life. Nothing else is designed to give us the kind of joy that we're meant to know within marriage.

And so marriage then points us to union with Christ. And in truthfulness, as good as marriage is, it does a really poor job because our union with Christ is even better than that.

[22 : 41] There will be no sin in heaven. Our marriage partner, Jesus Christ, he doesn't sin against us. Neither will we sin against him in eternity.

We will know that union without hindrance, without secrecy, without holding anything back, it will be pure joy for us. But God wanted to communicate that to us and so he does so through the union of marriage that we might know a bit of how sweet eternity will be with Christ.

That's a beautiful picture. But how absurd would it be if we got to heaven and we said, I want to be married again. As hard as that is for us to understand now, but that would be stepping backward.

It would be stepping away from the reality back into the type and shadow. It would be enjoying the Passover lamb all over again instead of enjoying Christ. So in 1 Corinthians 15, 28, Paul, speaking of the resurrected state, says, when all things are subjected to him, that's Christ, then the son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him that God may be all in all.

Now, Paul, speaking of the resurrected state, speaks of God being all in all. And I think there's the resurrection reality that we're missing now. God's not all in all. We experience our union as it were mediated through us through marriage at times.

[24 : 07] But there's coming a day when we'll know that union fully. We'll fully know our union with Christ. We'll know the joy in that. And marriage won't be necessary. Marriage is a temporary thing to point us to a greater reality.

It's a shadow. It's a type. And so we don't want to go back to that in the resurrected state. We will fully know the greater joy of our union with Christ. That means that in the resurrection state, I always love Jonathan Edwards said this in his writing on 1 Corinthians 13.

But he says in heaven we will be deprived of no good thing. In heaven we will be deprived of no good thing. So our tendency sometimes is to think well I'm going to miss certain aspects of this life when I get to heaven.

And the reality is we're clinging to the shadows and the types when the reality awaits us to happen. So we won't be deprived of marriage. We will be given the greater union.

Does that make sense? We are deprived now of a greater union and we settle for marriage. Which is great but it's not Christ. It's not eternal and it's marred by sin.

[25 : 13] In the resurrected state we will have the reality itself. There won't be one of us who will feel jilt when we get to heaven. Man, I really like that marriage I had. I wish I still had that instead of Christ.

No, we'll get it then even though we struggle now. And to speak honestly I think when we contemplate death when I personally contemplate death missing out on marriage and my family is one of the things I think I dread the most.

I don't want to die because I love my family. But the Christian ought to be encouraged that we're not going to miss out when we get to heaven. What awaits us is far greater in Christ. So as good as marriage is it will be replaced by something far far greater.

So in the resurrected state we will fully know the greater union. Secondly just for some obvious points there will be no need to procreate. There will be no continuing procreation happening in heaven.

And then likewise sin will be no more so marriage will not be needed as a means of guarding us against sin. If we think of other purposes that God has given to marriage it's procreate to fill the earth to spread his glory to the ends of the earth and it's a protection against sexual lust and sin.

[26 : 27] And in the eternal state we will no longer have sin so we won't be tempted to that. We don't need that guard and there will be no need to procreate. There will be no adding to the number of people who are there.

And so Jesus goes on to say we'll be like the angels in heaven. Now as he says that let me just say that does not mean we become angels.

I mean I know popular culture there's probably numerous miracle excuse numerous movies that have someone dying only to become an angel. And they come back and they become the guardian angel.

There's movies where the person dies and then the angel the angel comes back or the ghost comes back and they fall in love. That's not what it's about. What Jesus says when he says we'll be like the angels in heaven what he means is what I've just elaborated on.

It means we won't marry and neither will we neither do they. Angels don't have marriage we won't have marriage we'll be like them in the sense of there won't be marriage we'll have Christ instead.

[27 : 35] And so I think he's just reiterating that I just want to make that clear I don't know if that's anything that you guys have been exposed to but just to encourage you we don't become angels. Angels are a separate creation.

Man is separate from the angels we're both created order we're different. The one thing we'll have in common with the angels is that we won't be married but we know as well neither do they.

We'll be in a pure and spiritual state similar to them at least until our bodies as well are resurrected and we're reunited with the body and have a glorified body. And sin will be no more so marriage will not be needed I'm sorry I went back too far worshiping God without hindrance or distraction like the angels.

in this life we worship God but even now I'll pick on you guys even now in the midst of the sermon there probably have been thoughts that have gone through your mind about other things that are happening in your life.

Even in the very midst of worshiping God if it's not the sermon in the midst of the service as we've sang hymns things distract us. While we pray one of the kids was speaking to me recently how hard it is sometimes to focus while we pray.

[28 : 46] You start praying for something then you begin to think well what's going to happen tomorrow and our mind gets oh I was praying and we have to come back. I think we'll be like the angels in heaven the fact that there will be no distraction.

We'll be in the very presence of God sin will not be a hindrance and we'll be able to worship God purely. Secondly in our sermon I want us to look at what Jesus teaches us about God.

Now we looked at before Jesus says in the Satchitoches you know neither the scriptures we looked at the scriptures he says nor the power of God what does he mean in verse 29 when he says that they don't know the power of God.

I think what he's saying is to deny the resurrection is to deny the power of God. Let's just be honest the idea of resurrection seems a little crazy to us a little absurd.

We know what a dead body is like they don't become reanimated. Right? We don't if you were to go to the graveyard and start digging up graves you have a hundred percent failure rate of bringing any of those bodies back to life.

[29 : 46] We know what they're like we know what they become. Dust to dust right? And to consider that there are people who have died thousands of years years ago they're dust they're dirt now.

How can dirt become a living body again? That seems absurd to us. So to say that it can't happen because to us it seems absurd is to deny the power of God.

To imagine that God is somehow limited in his power to our reasoning and what we think is possible. And so they're denying the power of God. Matthew 19 26 we looked at a few weeks ago.

Jesus looked to them and said with man this is impossible but with God all things are possible. Do we deny the resurrection because we would think that God's not capable of that? No way.

All things are possible with God. Later on when Paul appears before King Agrippa he says and now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers to which our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly worship night and day and for this hope I am accused by Jews O King why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

[31 : 07] So again we have here Paul saying this I'm on trial because I believe that God raises the dead namely Jesus Christ and they put me on trial because they think that's incredible incredible is not just impressive he means unbelievable it's not credible it's unbelievable but why would any of you think that this is unbelievable for God it's impossible for God so while to us raising the dead seems impossible it doesn't seem impossible to God it's not impossible to God now this is one area that here Jesus is specifically addressing the Sadducees in this belief of the resurrection and maybe for us it's not the resurrection but I think how many more errors do we hold to because we doubt the power of God we don't believe God's capable of that how does our doubting the power of God affect our prayer life at times and so before we say the Sadducees they didn't believe in the power of God let's consider are there ways in which we deny the power of

God and what we believe or what we deny or even in how we pray we need to be reminded as well don't we that all things are possible to God God can do all things and then he goes on to say that God is a God of the living Jesus answers them from the scripture which he's already said that they don't know look at verse 32 well let me start in verse 31 and as for the resurrection of the dead have you not read what was said to you by God so again are you ignorant of the scripture I am the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob he's not a God of the dead but of the living now this is a bit of a logical argument that Jesus presents here but he's saying for God to be anyone's God presupposes their existence I know that's a little difficult but to say that God is someone's God means that they still exist God's not a God of non-existence he's a God of existence if the soul were to go out of existence then God would cease to be the

God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob because they don't exist anymore so what does it matter if he's their God he's saying that God God's affirmation in the Old Testament that he's the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob speaks to the fact that they still live and he's still their God which ought to encourage us for God to be anyone's God still presupposes not only that they exist and that God exists but that the benefits received of that relationship still exist that such a relationship still is inferring or providing as it were blessings upon Abraham and Isaac and Jacob I think we have hints of this even in God's word maybe even more than a hint but Abraham was given a promise the Abrahamic covenant you guys remember the Abrahamic covenant he would make him into a great nation and he would give him a land and so what land was it that Abraham longed for this would be a great trivia question if we were going to have some good

Sunday school discussion what land was it that Abraham longed for now let me say that some of you may think oh it's a promised land it's what would eventually become Israel that's the land that God promised to them it's the promised land but is that ultimately what Abraham looked for well here's God's own commentary on this Hebrews 11 verse 16 speaking more broadly but as it is they desire a better country that is a heavenly one therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he has prepared for them a city earlier in Hebrews it's in Hebrews 11 it also speaks of Abraham not receiving that land he died before he received that land but that's not what he longed for what was it he longed for an eternal city a resurrection and so as we look at this I think what we need to see is that the resurrection is so certain that God's called the God of the living not the God of the dead he's the

God of the living Abraham Isaac and Jacob even to this day have not yet been reunited with the resurrected body but their soul lives on in the presence of God and so too is the state of all of us who die in our faith so what does this mean for us how do we apply these truths to us well first I think it's important for us to understand that we must be students of the word of God we have to study the scriptures lest we fall into deadly error that's where Jesus begins with you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God so are we students of God and of his word are we studying him do we seek to know what God's like to know his power to believe that power do we know what God's word teaches us about the resurrection these things are important they're not optional things we don't just say well I've always wondered maybe I'll read about the resurrection sometime I'm curious about such things God laid upon us a burden to know the scriptures and what they teach and not knowing them may lead us into deadly error such as denying even the resurrection secondly as application we should seek to or strive to have a glimpse or a foretaste of heaven in our marriages if

[36 : 41] God has designed marriage as the foremost place in which we experience our union with Christ we taste it here in this life then there's a burden upon us isn't there that we ought to make our home such as that we have to seek for our marriages to be a taste of that relationship as much as we can that we might know a bit of those joys of our union with Christ it's here in marriage that we get the best glimpse of what it means for God to dwell with us forever as we move to the Christmas season as we sing songs like oh come oh come Emmanuel that term Emmanuel means God with us and so we have a foretaste of that in the incarnation that God dwelt with us but we know there's coming a resurrected day a resurrected state where we will dwell with God the continuing remembrance that God has given us of that is marriage it's meant to point us to that I could argue as well it's the dwelling of the spirit but as we think of Christmas and Emmanuel think also of marriage and how it's meant to be a place in which we know and taste of that union with

Christ thirdly because of that union with Christ we need to understand that the Christians eternal state is guaranteed for us it's not left up in the air there's not some probability that we might dwell with God forever because we're united to Christ and Christ is seated at the right hand of the father we too will be where Christ is so again that passage on the resurrection 1st Corinthians 15 we'll look at verses 12 through 20 now now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead but if there is no resurrection of the dead then not even Christ has been raised and if Christ has not been raised and our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain we are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised for the sins then those also who have fallen asleep in

Christ have perished if in Christ we have hope in this life only we are of all people most to be pitied so Paul is building a pretty complicated argument here but what he's saying is this if there's no resurrection that Christ can't be resurrected if we flip that what he's also saying if Christ is resurrected then that's proof to us that there's a resurrection so we can't say there's no resurrection if Christ has been resurrected and he joins up with the idea that if Christ is not resurrected then there's no hope for us we're all going to perish our hope is in Christ resurrection but if Christ has been raised and he has then we have a sure guarantee that for all who trust in Christ they will know that resurrection from the dead and so let me just close with one final point in saying that in light of all this that we should praise God now for the joys that are to be experienced for us one day in eternity he's given us a foretaste of it he's promised it he's spoken to us about it we ought to rejoice we ought to praise

God for the resurrection that awaits those who put their trust in Jesus Christ let's pray now dear father we thank you that you are such a good and gracious God that you have allowed us to taste of that even in this life but one day that we will enter into your presence forever and we will need nothing to mediate that presence we'll need nothing to stand between us and you between Christ but we will dwell with you forever oh lord we long for that day we pray that we would be with you lord we pray if there's any of this who have never trusted in Jesus Christ that they would do so today for your word has made clear that their souls will live on forever either in heaven or hell there are no other options to us as nice as it might be for those who haven't trusted in Christ to imagine that their souls would just die and be over that's not the case and there awaits us either the eternal joys of heaven or the eternal punishment of hell lord we pray for those in this room that they would put their faith and trust in

Jesus Christ that they would even taste now of that joy and lord even more so in the days that come ahead in the resurrected state we thank you for that blessed promise and that hope we pray this in Christ name amen■