

10.25.15 Mark 12:18-27

O. Intro:

*I read a new study that shows the current human mortality rate continues to hover right around 100%

*Just kidding, we don't need a study for that...one thing we all have in common is death.

*When death, which is always immanent; becomes overtly so...we are diagnosed with a terminal condition (life is a terminal condition) or a loved one dies...we tend to become very interested in the life to come.

*I had lunch with my son-in-law, a great man...we spoke of his daughter and my granddaughter Norah.

*Norah's precarious physical state is obvious...but we spoke of the fact that all of us are easy to kill.

*We can worry about Norah, but we can also worry about Oliver...he's two and healthy as a horse...but all humans have a 100% mortality rate.

*So what are we to do?

*Common tracks:

1. Worry
2. Deny
3. Avoid
4. Distract
5. Error

*Biblical approach is to: Understand, Trust, and live.

***Psa. 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

*Clearly wisdom connected to realism concerning our mortality is not...worry, denial, avoidance, distraction, or error.

*Wisdom is to understand, trust...live now in light of that understanding and trust.

*We have been in Mark since the beginning of the year.

*We have covered every major theological topic as well as virtually every apologetic issue and many important cultural issues.

*Such is the nature of God's Word...One book...the gospel of Jesus, according to Mark...universally applicable.

Mark 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 19 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” 24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 26 Now about the dead rising — have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

*Sadducees were not "liberal" in the contemporary sense of not believing in heaven or the authority of the Bible.

*They were hyper conservative...they didn't believe the "five books Moses" (Pentateuch) Gen-Duet) taught about the resurrection so they regarded it as pure speculation.

*In addition they saw belief in the resurrection as politically risky.

*Even back then certain revolutionary groups used the idea of a glorious after life to inspire martyrdom...much like Islamic groups do today.

*The Sadducees were well-connected, sophisticated, urban and wealthy...so they didn't want anyone upsetting the political/economic status quo.

*They were a small, but influential group...this has always been the case...small, well connected groups hold disproportionate influence.

*They were also closely tied to Jerusalem so when the city was destroyed in 70AD and Jews were massacred...they disappeared from history.

*Wealthy, ruling classes often do not like to think about the afterlife...and they certainly do not want those who are discontent with this life doing daring, risky things that will upset their lifestyle.

*So...for those two reasons...theological and social...they were opposed to anyone teaching about the resurrection.

*Now here is Jesus teaching about the resurrection which looks a lot like he is starting a revolutionary movement...and he is...but not like they think.

*So to test him out they tell a presumably hypothetical story that depends on Jewish law.

*If a man dies married but childless, his younger brother is commanded to marry his widow and count the children as his brother...keeping the family line and the inheritance intact.

*In the story this happens 7 times to one woman...its highly improbably this actually happened, but not impossible.

*Either way the Sadducees use this story as evidence that the resurrection is silly...if they all come back to life, whose wife will the woman be?

*It was probably a story commonly used to defend their position against the Pharisees(who believed in the resurrection)... "So, Mr. Pharisee...what about the widow who had seven husbands story, huh?"

*So, here again some "smart" people are trying to "outsmart" Jesus.

*"I know, let's use the widow 7 story on Jesus, he won't get out of that one."

***But of course, once again the attempt to outsmart Jesus fails...because he is always smarter.**

*By the way...this thought alone has practical bearing on our lives.

*I have several friends who are, by their current life choices, trying to outsmart Jesus.

*They are aware of what he wants and doesn't want for them...however, they want something different.

*Now...will they continue down their own path...and be happy and successful anyway...ultimately proving themselves smarter than Jesus in regards to their own lives?

OR

*Will they simply prove once again, through their own unhappiness...that we cannot outsmart Jesus?

*By the way, Jesus will take no delight in the misery these people will bring on themselves by their own pride...but he will get glory from it.

*How? Obedience or Rebellion...in the end, both paths prove God to be true.

*And their root cause of their sin (and ours) is pride..."I know better than God what will work in my own life."

Jesus answers two ways:

1. Answer 1: You do not understand the power of God: Resurrection is not resuscitation:

*We do not come back into exactly the same sort of physical life as before.

-Resurrection is a different type of bodily life.

*People often think of "resurrection" as "life after death"

*And life after death is some kind of disembodied state called "heaven"

*Where among other things, angels fly around here and there...therefore when you die you go to heaven where you live a sort of spiritualized existence, like an angel...and that is resurrection.

*This passage and the NT teaching about the resurrection teach the exact opposite of this "street myth" about the afterlife.

*The order of things is:

a. Life now

b. Death...where we live in God's presence in some status that the Bible does not give a lot of information about.

*Other than the fact that we are not going to be angels, or spooks haunting the hereafter.

*It's often called by theologians "the intermediate state" or "intermediate heaven"

c. Resurrection...new and different physical bodies to enjoy the new heaven and earth...this follows the final judgment.

*Nowhere in that process are we "disembodied spirits" or "angels" of some type.

*"But Terry, Jesus says we will be like angels"

*Yes but the context is specific...we will be **like** the angels in that we will not marry.

*Angels are beyond death, as we will be...there is no need to propagate the species or continue the family line(which was the point behind the law about the brother marrying the widow).

*The new physical state of existence makes all this obsolete.

*So the Lord's first point is that resurrection will not reproduce every aspect of our present lives.

*We will have recognizable, physical existence...but a great change will have taken place...the exact nature of that change we can only wonder at.

2. Answer 2: You do not understand the scriptures:

*Next Jesus finds a passage at the heart of the Pentateuch, one acknowledged by the Sadducees as authoritative.

*So he uses a scripture they accept to prove they are missing the point.

*From that passage Jesus demonstrates the dead will indeed be raised.

*Remember they denied the resurrection because they could not find it in the first five books...Jesus is going to show them what they had missed from the second of the five books.

*When God met Moses at the burning bush, he introduced himself as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's God...present tense.

*If this is how God chose to reveal himself...it cannot be that these fellows were dead and gone forever.

*This doesn't mean that Jesus is simply saying that these fellas are alive in the afterlife and this is synonymous with resurrection.

*Everybody knew the big three had not yet risen from the dead...the point is they are presently dead...but since God is still known as their God...he must be intending to raise them from the dead in the future.

*The gift of God of a new body to enjoy life in God's new world...that's his point here.

*Contrary to Eastern Pantheism, or Western New Age theology...that both deny the importance of the physical...humans are designed to have bodies.

*Our physical existence is not a mistake, or an illusion, or a second string existence that will give way to the first class status of being disembodied spirits.

2Cor. 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

*When Paul speaks of not being found "naked" he is specifically referring to the fact that we will never exist in a disembodied state...this idea was both repulsive to the Jewish people and unbiblical.

*It had its roots in non-Christian thinking...like the Gnostics who said that matter is evil and only the spiritual is good.

*So...for these anti-physical folks...Jesus only **appeared** to have a physical body...but he was in fact pure spirit...because only spirit is good.

*This physical/spiritual dualism is one more version of a two-story life.

*The reality is that Jesus was "fully God and fully man".

*Likewise we are spiritual beings that possess a physical existence and in the future God will give us new created physical bodies.

*"Terry, this sounds a bit far-fetched."

*"Okay, what exactly sounds unreasonable?"

*"That the God who made everything, will someday remake everything...is that it?"

*The problem most often is not the conclusion is unreasonable or irrational...it the conclusion is determined by the starting point...our presuppositions.

*How reasonable is the current prevailing narrative regarding human origin and destiny

***Origins: time plus chance=life**

***Destiny: Life plus time=nothing**

*How exactly do they know by reason what cannot possible be known by reason...origins and destiny?

*There is no amount of time or known mechanism that would allow for the atheistic evolutionary development of humans, let alone the precision of earth to support human life.

*So...the obvious solution is...we are designed.

*I was in a large watch shop at Norfolk Navy base last week(never seen one this big)...some were very expensive...evidently when sailors return from sea they like to buy watches.

*Some had visible mechanisms...intricate, precise.

*And even the most expensive and intricate watch...like this 4.6 million dollar watch...is nothing at all in terms of complexity when compared to the human body.

*Anything ever made by a human is as comparatively complex as a rock is to an iPhone when compared to a human being.

*Yet no one would ever conceive of a theory to explain this watch as having happened by chance and time...it is clearly created...no doubts.

*Anyone who tried to explain it as a product of time and chance would be laughed at...considered a fool.

*Again there is no mechanism that could explain the complexity that exists...especially given our current knowledge of cells and the irreducible complexity that we possess at that level.

*So Evolutionary theory has gone through stages...attempts to explain what we see...mind-blowing complexity...design.

*Acquired traits, favorable mutations, punctuated equilibrium...all have had significant problems.

*In terms of cosmology...the struggle is to explain the precision of the design and placement of our little blue planet...they struggle to explain the apparent design.

*Stephen Hawking's fallback theory is called "M-theory"...there are an infinite number of universes...we are in the lucky one where all the good stuff...because if you roll the dice an infinite number of times...anything is possible.

*My point is...its not far-fetched, or an intellectual stretch to begin with an uncaused creator...God.

*To keep reaching for a reason to explain a watch without a watchmaker is, in my opinion, irrational.

*There is a God who created all that exists apart from himself (something after all is uncaused and eternal).

*What he created is physical...he must think that is a good idea.

*He himself "took on flesh" and became a man in order to reach men and women.

*So...its not at all a stretch to believe that he intends to give us resurrection physical bodies

*Here is Mark, Jesus is teaching the reality of resurrection...that's good reason to believe it

*In addition...he will resurrect and show up to many people in his resurrected body.

*A body that was unlike ours...he could come and go from our perception at will.

*A body that was much like ours...he could be recognized, he ate, he walked.

*Throughout history dualism has tried to do battle with the reality of what God has made.

*On one extreme...all that exists is the physical...so live by your instincts, you are a mere animal...do what comes naturally.

*On the other extreme...all that is real and valuable is the spiritual...you are a god in the making, or an indistinct piece of the great spirit...and since the physical really doesn't matter in the end...do what you want with it...or live a life denying it.

*These imbalances, being out of touch with the actual design of reality...lead to a host of problems.

*While the biblical balance...we are spiritual beings designed to live a physical existence...leads to a host of solutions...we are able to live whole, healthy lives...spiritually as well as physically.

***Resurrection:** What are we understand? How are we to trust? What does it mean to live this out?

1. UNDERSTAND:

*This is a large topic; if you want to read a single non-technical book on it...Randy Alcorn has a book entitled "Heaven"

*He gives what is clear in Scripture and then gives some "what might be but we don't know" thoughts...and he is careful to make the distinction.

*Some believers live in fear of death because of a misunderstanding of what follows.

*Death, in the best case scenario...conjures up ideas of eternal boredom...endless church services...I like church...I don't want to live in a worship service.

*In worse case...we will exist sort of haunting heaven in some androgynous spiritualized form.

*This all sounds scary to me...the thought of that kind of eternal existence would make me anxious.

*By the way my favorite book on thinking about the life to come is Lewis' "The Great Divorce" ...I've lost track of how many times I've read it.

*Its not a theological book...it is a book that inspires "holy imagination" regarding our eternal future.

*And as he says...the real thing is better than our best imaginations, not worse than.

*One leading church official was asked what he expected after death, he replied, "Well I suppose I shall enter into eternal bliss, but I really wish you wouldn't bring up such depressing subjects."

*Genesis...God looked at all he had made (including us, in our bodies) and said..."Now, that's very good."

*Our future is very good as well...a future of real lives, real trees, skies, food, relationships, exploration, interesting things to learn, see, hear, and do.

*I have absolutely no interest in a disembodied eternal existence...thank God I don't have to try and be interested in it.

*I am immensely interested in stars and planets and trees and flowers and rivers and oceans and people...and God.

*If you want lots of scripture related to the reality of the new heavens and earth...read Alcorn's book or a good systematic theology like Grudem's.

*I want mostly to inspire your thinking this morning...you can go dig into the specifics on your own.

*Alcorn said "Satan need not convince us that Heaven doesn't exist. He need only convince us that Heaven is a place of boring, unearthly existence."

*When that happens we are robbed of our joy and anticipation...then the powerful, positive life altering eternal hope is lost.

*You want a picture of the life to come...take in the beauty of what God has made...subtract the sin, suffering and death that we have caused...and there you go.

**"What about the marriage thing?"

**"I cannot conceive of not having my spouse...or a spouse."

**You will not have less joy, fulfillment, relationship than you do now...you will have more.

**Heaven will not be a step down but a huge step up.

**What about sex?...for many Americans heaven cannot be heaven without sex.

**In fact in Islam and other religions...Mormonism...sex is a prominent part of the life to come.

*A lot could be said about what this says about us...culturally as well as theologically...but I'll simply give you a Lewis quote and move on...

"I think our present outlook might be like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer "No," he might regard absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don't bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate: he does not know the positive thing that excludes it. We are in the same position. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it."

2. TRUST

*"Soon you will read in the newspaper that I am dead. Don't believe it for a moment. I will be more alive than ever before." Moody

*"Earth recedes, heaven opens before me!" Moody on his deathbed

*Many of the struggles we have with all this is the complete lack of experience coupled with limited knowledge.

*All of us have experienced some anxiety about going to new places, having new experiences that are seemingly totally outside what we believe we have experienced before.

*I once spoke with a 21 year old in NY City slum called Bed-stuy (more murders than any place in America at the time).

*He had never ventured out of the larger Brooklyn area but felt trapped there...I invited him to Kansas...I offered to buy him a bus ticket to come start a new life.

*He refused because he was afraid.

*Afraid to leave Bed-stuy, where I could hear gunshots at night like a combat zone...to come to Wichita...because he was afraid.

*Afraid of the unknown, to venture beyond his experience (bad as it was).

*We simply have never been dead and furthermore we cannot conceive of being dead.

*We also cannot conceive of all that the life to come will entail...this is all we have ever known.

***1Cor. 2:9 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” —**

*We cannot get there with our minds and our experience...but the next verse tells how we can start to get there.

***V.10 "But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit."**

*God has told us what we cannot discover on our own...we can trust God with what we cannot conceive on our own.

***If that young man had been able to trust me (which he didn't, he just met me)...that would have made a difference.**

*Ultimately we must trust...

John 14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”

3. LIVE

*In 1952 Florence Chadwick attempted to swim from Catalina Island to the California mainland (22 miles).

*She was the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways (21 miles)

*The weather was foggy and chilly, she could hardly see the boats accompanying her.

*She swam for 15 hours...when she begged to be taken out of the water, her mother, in one of the boats told her she was close and could make it.

*Finally she was exhausted, physically and emotionally...she had to be pulled from the water.

*Only when she was in the boat did she realize she was less than a half mile away.

*At the news conference the next day she said "All I could see was the fog...I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it."

*Historically, Christians who have done the most to impact the world now thought most about the world to come.

*Our lack of understanding and contemplation of the world to come makes us less effective in the world we live in now.

*Lewis "Aim for heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither."

*Do not be lulled to sleep by the life that surrounds you...there is more, much more.

*And the true impact of this perception is that we are empowered to live this life to the fullest.

*We become truly resilient...we can sacrifice, we can lose, we can win...without become broken, desperate or self-consumed.

*Nothing I can do personally is more valuable in terms of perspective than simply meditating on the fact that I will die as well every person I see around me.

*Then to put our confidence in the promises of the gospel regarding the life to come.

*Finally, with the combination of right perspective and Christ-centered courage...we have a chance to go and live a life of wisdom in a culture of folly.

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Intro:

Common approaches to the reality of death are:

- Worry
- Deny
- Avoid
- Distract
- Error

Talk about the various ways you have seen, or heard of people taking these approaches and some possible outcomes in the lives of people who take them.

Read:

Mark 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. **19** “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. **20** Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. **21** The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. **22** In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. **23** At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” **24** Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? **25** When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. **26** Now about the dead rising — have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? **27** He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

Discuss:

1. Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, Pharisees did. Sadducees did not believe because they could not directly find it mentioned in the first five books of the Bible and it threatened their economic/social status.
*How might a belief in a life after death impact a person's choice or a society for better and/or worse?
2. What are some ways you have tried to "outsmart Jesus" and what were the outcomes?
3. What are some common myths regarding the "afterlife?"
4. How is resurrection different from resuscitation?
5. Do you struggle with the reality or possibility of life after death...why or why not?
(When presenting your position, if you do not struggle, make sure you are empathetic when someone who might struggle...don't make them feel stupid or wicked.)
6. Again, we see that everyone lives by faith. A famous argument for design is the "Watchmaker argument." One atheist wrote a book called the "blind watchmaker" where he argued against design. How does a person's presuppositions (starting point) impact their conclusions? Can anything be done to impact a person's presuppositions?
7. Dualism is an approach to life that separates reality into the physical and the spiritual. Often making one more important than the other. How might Christians fall into this kind of thinking and what are some practical results?

Apply:

1. Understand: Is your vision of final human destiny biblical, partly biblical, or are you unsure?

*If necessary what can you do to ensure you have a correct understanding?

2. Trust: Read and spend some time thanking God for the following...

John 14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going

3. Live: Reflect for a few minutes on the reality of your own death as well as those you live and work with. Try not to move into fear but rather reflect with faith.

*How did that short reflection time impact your perspective on various parts of your life...troubles, desires, struggles, job, etc.?

THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Mark 12:18-27

**“FOR EVEN THE
SON OF MAN
DID NOT COME
TO BE SERVED,
BUT TO SERVE,
AND TO GIVE
HIS LIFE AS A
RANSOM FOR
MANY.”**

MARK 10:45

J. STILL

**Teach us to number our days aright, that
we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

Ps. 90:12

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1. Resurrection is not resuscitation

2. They didn't understand the Scriptures

2 Cor. 5:1:3 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Human Origins: Time + Chance = Life

Human Destiny: Life + Time = Nothing





Louis Moinet Meteoris Watch - \$ 4.6million



Time + Chance = Everything...how?

Acquired traits...

Favorable mutations...

Punctuated equilibrium...

?

SPIRITUAL



~~**PHYSICAL**~~

PHYSICAL



~~**SPIRITUAL**~~

SPIRITUAL/PHYSICAL

**UNDERSTAND
TRUST
LIVE**

UNDERSTAND

(Randy Alcorn: "Heaven")

"I think our present outlook might be like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer "No," he might regard absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don't bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate: he does not know the positive thing that excludes it. We are in the same position. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it."

TRUST

"Soon you will read in the newspaper that I am dead. Don't believe it for a moment. I will be more alive than ever before."

D.L. Moody

**"Earth recedes, heaven opens before
me!"**

D.L. Moody on his deathbed.

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**"But God has revealed it to us by his
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John 14:1-4 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

LIVE

**"Aim for heaven and you will get earth
'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get
neither."**