

The King Greater than David

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[0 : 00] Let's ask God for his help to illuminate our minds. Heavenly Fathers, we've just sung your word is living light.

Your word can make the simple wise. And so, Father, we pray that you would come to speak to us today, help us to encounter the living, risen Christ all over again, to enlarge our view of him so that we might be able to offer you our lives.

So please illuminate our minds and our hearts by your spirit. We pray all this in the name of Christ. Amen. We're going to be in Luke 20 today, but let me begin by jumping ahead to Luke 24.

Picture the scene. Two weary travelers are walking down to a little village called Emmaus. Their hearts are heavy. They're filled with confusion because Jesus has died.

And as they walk, a stranger joins them. He asks what's going on. And they're shocked. How could he not know? Jesus' death has been the only news in town for the last couple of days.

[1 : 17] But then something incredible happens. This stranger starts unpacking the scriptures for them. From Moses to the prophets, he shows how every promise, every story points forward to the Messiah who will suffer and die again.

But it's only when they sit down to eat that it hits them. Their wise companion is actually the risen Jesus.

Suddenly, everything clicks. No wonder the scriptures now make sense. No wonder their hearts even burn for him, Luke says.

Because they've been listening to none other than Jesus himself. So when Jesus disappears, they don't panic. They still have the scriptures.

They've heard Jesus himself explain them. So they have all they need to live lives on fire for him. And let me suggest that something similar is happening in our passage today.

[2 : 23] Although the setting couldn't be more different. Once again, Jesus is unpacking the scriptures. But this time, it's before an audience who is skeptical, unwilling to listen, even hostile.

And as we'll observe this morning, if we come to Jesus with hard hearts, the scriptures will never make sense. They'll just seem like a confusing mix of theological riddles and obscure Bible verses. But if we humbly allow Jesus to explain the scriptures to us, whether it is from Exodus or the Psalms or even from Luke itself, everything begins to click.

More than that, it becomes good news to us. For we will see how everything is fulfilled in him and our hearts will begin burning for him.

So today, let's come with open hearts and let Jesus himself unpack the scriptures for us. And this morning, Jesus especially wants us to see three key things.

[3 : 32] He wants us to see the resurrection revealed as a truth that can't be denied. And then he'll help us to see the Messiah unveiled as the Lord who reigns forever.

And subsequently, he'll help us see the faith embodied in someone who accepts the first two things. So as we walk through today's passage, let's ask the Spirit to open our eyes, just as he did for those Emmaus travelers, so that our hearts can burn for the risen Jesus.

So firstly, see the resurrection revealed. So far in Luke 20, we have seen group after group try to take on Jesus and fail.

Two weeks ago, they challenged him directly. By what authority are you doing these things? Then last week, they tried to trick him. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

But each time, Jesus skillfully escapes their trap. They just can't pin him down. So now in verse 27, a new group steps in.

[4 : 47] The Sadducees. Who are they? The Bible doesn't say much about them, but they were an influential Jewish group. In Jerusalem, you couldn't do business without crossing paths with them.

But they were not like the Pharisees. Unlike the Pharisees, they don't believe in angels and demons. Unlike the Pharisees, they accept only the Torah, that is, the first five books of the Bible, as authoritative and not the entire Old Testament.

And most importantly for today's passage, unlike the Pharisees, they don't believe in resurrection. And having watched all these failed attempts, they probably decide enough is enough and declare, all right guys, move aside, let us professionals handle Jesus.

See, unlike you Pharisees, we know how to put him in his place. And the way we'll do that is to pick a theological fight with him.

Now, I don't know about you, but that sounds like a really bad idea to me. Do you really want to debate with Jesus over the Bible? But that's what they do. Here's where their plan kicks off.

[6 : 11] They figure that a clever trick would do the trick. And they've got just a hypothetical scenario to do it.

Verse 28. 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 raise up offspring for his brother.

Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her. And in the same way, the seven died, leaving no children.

Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the resurrection, on the last day, whose wife will she be since the seven were married to her?

Now let's unpack this. The Sadducees are referring to a law from Moses found in Deuteronomy 25 verses 5 to 6 about something called levirate marriage.

[7 : 21] The idea was that if a woman became a childless widow, her brother-in-law was to marry her and have a son to carry on the family name.

This was crucial because without a son, there would be no heir. And if there's no heir, your property will be gone, redistributed to others, and your family heritage will disappear.

This law also ensured that the widow would be cared and provided for. But here is the dilemma.

What if the brother-in-law also dies without fathering an heir for his late brother?

Then maybe the next brother steps in. But what if the same thing happens to him too? And what if it's the same scenario seven times over?

Then what happens when the woman dies? At the resurrection, whose wife will she be? That's the big question.

[8 : 33] After all, didn't the Torah command levirate marriage while also upholding marriage as a one-man, one-woman covenant in Genesis 2?

So, if Jesus says this woman is married to all seven, then isn't he violating the one-man, one-woman pattern for marriage?

But if Jesus says this woman is only married to her first husband, then wouldn't he be guilty of revoking Moses' law of levirate marriage?

So, just like last week, it looks like Jesus is stuck. And that is precisely the point. You see, the Sadducees are not really interested in an answer.

What they're simply trying to do is show how stupid the whole idea of resurrection really is. Their purpose was to make the audience laugh and say, Oh, yeah, yeah, this situation makes no sense at all.

[9 : 46] Therefore, resurrection can't be true. By doing this, they were sure they would discredit Jesus. After all, hadn't he thought on the resurrection before?

Even his very own? So, if the resurrection looked ridiculous, Jesus would look ridiculous. And any claim of his to be the Messiah would be laughable.

So, how does Jesus answer? Well, actually, Jesus does so in two parts. In verses 34 to 36.

And verses 37 to 38. And I thought for today, maybe the best way to explain his answer is actually to do verses 37 to 38 first.

Before going back to verses 34 to 36. So, that's what I'm going to do. You see, the Sadducees have just used the Bible to try to make their case, haven't they?

[10 : 51] That's why they're so confident. Look, Jesus, I have played my Deuteronomy 25 card and my Genesis 2 card. So, what have you got?

And Jesus says, okay. Since you are so keen to appeal to the Torah, let me do so as well. Verse 37.

But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

He's not the God of the dead, but of the living. For to him all are alive. So, what is Jesus up to here? Well, let us slow down to try to understand Jesus' point.

Jesus is saying, hey, Sadducees, shall we do a Bible study on Exodus 3 verse 6? Did you notice what God said to Moses?

[11 : 58] If you were to turn back to Exodus 3 verse 6, you will find that he says this. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, think about it. We know Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are long dead by the time God meets Moses in the burning bush.

So, Sadducees, according to your beliefs, shouldn't God have said to Moses, I was the God of Abraham?

After all, he's now dead. Or shouldn't he have said, I used to be the God of Isaac and Jacob? But no longer, since they're dead too.

But God doesn't. He says, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Present tense.

[13 : 03] He speaks as if he's just been hanging out with them, as if they have just spoken to him recently. In other words, the language of Exodus 3 verse 6 implies that even though they have already died, God still has a living, present relationship with them.

And so they must still be alive in some form. And that must mean God has every intention of one day raising them back to life everlasting.

If he can't do that, then, verse 38, how can he truly be the God of the living rather than the dead?

No, God is not done with them.

If God is the God of the living, then he must establish a future for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob where death is not the last word.

And that must mean resurrection is a reality. So the first thing Jesus establishes is that the resurrection is taught even in the Torah.

[14 : 28] the only part of scripture the Sadducees accept. And he doesn't just prove it with a single verse but really on the basis of a single word.

Quite incredible, isn't it? But wait, this still doesn't answer the Sadducees' hypothetical question. If the resurrection is real, then whose wife will this hypothetical woman be?

Well, that brings us to the second part of Jesus' answer in verses 34 to 36. And his basic reply is, you have built your entire scenario on a false assumption.

You see, Sadducees, you think resurrection life is just this life times infinity. So you think that it follows the same patterns, the same rules, the same setup?

But Jesus says, no, it is a different reality altogether. How so? Well, he says in verse 34, in this age, the people marry and are given in marriage.

[15 : 56] But in the age to come, verse 35 says, we will neither marry nor be given in marriage. Why?

Because as verse 36 explains, we'll be like the angels. Now, that doesn't mean that we'll get wings or anything like that. It simply means we won't die just like them.

We will be inhabiting a different reality. And that is why the question of who this woman will be married to doesn't work.

She won't be married to anyone because human marriage will not carry over to the resurrection age. It was designed for this world and all its functions will become obsolete in the new creation.

You see, why did God create human marriage? One major reason, although not the only one, is procreation. We were meant to fill the earth so that generation after generation could keep ruling and caring for God's creation.

[17 : 18] But at the resurrection, since death is no more, there's no need to keep repopulating the earth. Hence, no more need for marriage.

And marriage was created also to reflect the union between Christ and his church. marriage. That's Ephesians 5. It is a preview of what is to come.

But now that the eternal reality has arrived, that preview is no longer necessary. So marriage ends, not because it is bad, but because something far better has taken its place.

That face-to-face relationship with Jesus that we've been longing for has finally become a reality.

And that really is the mind-blowing truth that Jesus wants us to finally get.

Resurrection life is not just an extension of this present life, but something far more amazing. [18 : 34] And that's what he has come to give us. He is heading to the cross precisely so that we'll be considered worthy to be children of the resurrection, to participate in this far better reality.

And so if Jesus is telling the truth, which he is, here are three implications for us. First of all, don't be a Sadducee.

you see, if you believe that this life is all there is, you're a modern-day Sadducee. And Sadducees just live for themselves.

After all, why care about others if you only live once and then vanish? It makes complete sense if that is the case to maximize your pleasure while you still can.

But Jesus has just shown us the Sadducees are wrong. And it won't be long before he proves it conclusively. He will rise from the dead.

[19 : 41] So that means this life isn't all there is and life therefore can't just be about chasing earthly pleasures. So don't be a Sadducee.

Instead, ask yourselves, am I living as if I am accountable to God who will one day raise me from the dead? If God audited my whole life, what would he find?

Would he find me living a Sadducee shaped life or a resurrection shaped one? And that's a question you need to ask whether or not you are a Christian this morning.

And in fact, if you are not a Christian, then you also need to ask, am I willing to accept Jesus as saviour and king of my life so that I won't be on the wrong side, I won't be caught out when the resurrection happens like the Sadducees.

Then second of all, don't underestimate how much better resurrection life is going to be. To be honest, being a Sadducee is quite sad, you see.

[20 : 57] Because if there really is no resurrection, then that means in the end, we truly don't have a future. We come into the world, we exist for a few decades, and then we're gone.

Why bother talking about the future then if that is it? And maybe that's why the Sadducees in this story are so fixated on leverage marriage. Because leverage marriage is all about having an heir. And if there is no resurrection, then the only kind of future you can have is leaving your name through your kids. But God says, look at the future I have in store for you.

It's a future where I know your name personally because I am in an eternal living covenant relationship with you. It's a future where I will be the God of Brian and Kenny and Joshua.

It's a future where there is no more death because there is no more sin and so there is no more curse, no more suffering. I wonder if sometimes we don't long for resurrection life because we think it would just be more of this life, right?

[22 : 15] You know what's the big deal? This life isn't so great. but think maybe of your favorite romantic comedies, you know, the ones with the most ideal relationships ever.

And God says, you know what? Resurrection life is going to be even better than that because the relationship you have with me is going to surpass even the most ideal relationships you know on earth.

And then third of all, more briefly, don't overvalue marriage. Don't overvalue marriage.

This is a more secondary and specific implication, but I think still needs to be said. You see, whether we are single or married today, we all need to be reminded human marriage is not the ultimate relationship.

We know that because it is not actually part of the new creation. It is not part of resurrection life. That's why our marriage vows say, till death do us part.

[23 : 27] There is actually an expiry date on marriage. So we should value marriage, but not overvalue it.

Don't idolize it. We shouldn't be communicating even if unintentionally that singleness is somehow second rate. Church shouldn't be a place where we end up concentrating more on pairing people up than on helping people know Jesus, as if human marriage is somehow more significant than our relationship with God.

That is to get the order the wrong way round. because it is our relationship with God that lasts for eternity. And if you wonder whether you will be sad because you won't be married to your spouse in the new creation, notice you will still be in that relationship with God which will bring you more joy than even human marriage.

So see the resurrection revealed as a truth that can't be denied. That's the first thing Jesus says will get our hearts burning today.

But don't stop there. Secondly, see the Messiah unveiled as the Lord who reigns forever. For most of chapter 20, the religious leaders have been the one asking the questions.

[25 : 05] So Jesus says, well, isn't it only fair I get my turn? Since you're also interested in theological discussions, I've also got a Bible question for you.

Verse 41. Why is it said that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself declares in the book of Psalms, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a foot stool for your feet.

David calls him Lord, how then can he be his son? Jesus is now focusing on a widely held belief that the Messiah would come from David's line.

And that belief is a correct one. Scripture backs it up. For example, every Christmas we read Isaiah 9. And what does it promise?

A Messiah on David's throne. Or take Jeremiah 23, which talks about a righteous king coming from David's family.

[26 : 18] So yes, it's true, the Messiah will come from David's line. But Jesus says, hold on, hold on, look at Psalm 110. It also calls the Messiah David's Lord, not just his son.

Wait, what? How is that possible? You see, back then, sons honored fathers. It was a given, like in many parts of Asia today.

But the reverse was not true. Fathers didn't bow down to sons. Imagine the young di petuan agong bowing to the Raja Muda. Just looks wrong, right?

That's how the culture taught as well. So here is the head scratcher. Psalm 110 says the Messiah is David's Lord, his superior, not his junior.

So how can he also be David's son? Or to put it the other way around, if he is David's descendant, why is David the one honoring him?

[27 : 40] Remember, it should be the son honoring the father. And the religious leaders are stumped. You know, all throughout Luke 20 they've been trying to outsmart Jesus, but their refusal to listen leaves them clueless about Psalm 110.

They're stuck. But we're not. Why not? Because Luke's gospel has given us the key. You see, how can the Messiah be both David's son and Lord?

Luke says, it is possible if that person is both divine and human. That is possible if he is Jesus.

Let me show you how. You see, does Luke say Jesus is the son of David? Absolutely. That has been clear from chapter one onwards.

Luke chapter one verse 32 has the angel telling Mary after telling her that she will have a son that the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

[29 : 00] The blind man in Luke chapter 18 cries out when he sees Jesus son of David have mercy. Luke makes clear Jesus is the son of David.

But Jesus isn't just that. Luke 19 which we looked at a few weeks ago shows Jesus entering Jerusalem telling his disciples to grab a coat, a donkey.

Why? Because the Lord needs it. That's what he says. Not just David's son, the Lord himself needs it.

So Jesus is saying the only way Psalm 110 makes sense is if the Messiah is both David's descendant and God himself come in human flesh and born into David's line.

And only Jesus fits the puzzle perfectly. He alone makes sense of all the data. You see, in the end, the issue isn't the scriptures, as if the scriptures are contradictory or something.

[30 : 15] It is the leader's stubbornness. The Messiah is standing right in front of them, unveiled before their very eyes, fulfilling the very scriptures that they are so devoted to, but they won't accept him.

Instead, they dig in, challenge him, and plot to take him out. And that is heartbreaking because you see, their attempts are futile. They are not going to stop Jesus from sitting at the right hand of the father.

And their attempts are foolish. These people are treating the son of God as the enemy. And if you do that, who are you really making your enemy?

Look at verse 43. God himself becomes your enemy. And what does God do to his enemies? He crushes them under his feet.

You see, on the surface, what seems to be happening seems like powerful people, religious leaders, civil authorities, are all conspiring together to crush some lowly carpenter from Nazareth. [31 : 33] But the underlying reality is far different. The Messiah is being unveiled, going on a journey to be crowned king of kings, and all who oppose him and keep opposing him will be crushed.

So here is the question for us. As we've been working our way through Luke's gospel over the last couple of years or so, do you see the Messiah being unveiled?

Do you see that David's son is David's Lord, and not just David's Lord, but our Lord as well?

You see, being a Christian isn't just about enjoying good sermons, not at all. Being a Christian isn't just about trying to look good before God and others in church, not at God.

It is about bowing down to him, surrendering to him so that every thought, word, and deed are in line with his will because Jesus is Lord.

[32 : 45] And scripture contains warning after warning that if we claim to know Christ, simply because maybe we think we enjoy the sermons or we are regulars in church, but we continue to live in sin, we are deceived.

It is a warning Jesus himself now delivers to his disciples in full hearing of all the people. Verse 45, life. While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, beware of the teachers of the law.

They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor and banquets. They devour widows houses and for a show, make lengthy prayers, this man will be punished most severely. You see, what's the problem with these religious leaders?

It is that they are trying to be lords. That's why they have these flowing robes to signify their elevated status and even wealth.

[34 : 01] Have you heard of the Preachers and Sneakers Instagram page? It highlights the expensive fashion choices of famous megachurch pastors to showcase their blessings.

That's the modern equivalent of flowing robes. And they love to be honored, they love to be significant, they love the VIP seats at official church functions.

But Jesus says wanting to be your own Lord is terrible. Because that means you are putting yourself at the center and expecting everyone else to keep it that way.

And that is why verse 47, these leaders devour widows' houses. Most likely, they were taking advantage of impressionable widows by encouraging them to give extravagantly to them.

Because, hey, aren't we doing the Lord's work? Don't you want to support the Lord's work? I mean, look at all these super spiritual prayers that I make. But Jesus is clear.

[35 : 13] Make yourself Lord, and verse 47, you will be punished most severely. Basically, if your money burns for, if your heart, sorry, burns for money, prestige, influence, making them Lord, rather than Jesus, you will find yourself burning in hell.

So how can we treat Jesus truly as the risen Lord? That brings us to the third and final thing Jesus wants us to see today. See the faith embodied in the life of this widow.

You see, to the religious leaders, widows are nothing more than things to be exploited. They're just another money-making avenue. But not to God. All throughout the Old Testament, God is particularly concerned for their welfare.

He knows they are vulnerable, and he wants to make sure they are looked after. He loves them.

And Jesus now draws attention to one of their number. Notice what she does, 21 verse 2.

She puts in two very small copper coins. one copper coin was something like 164th of a day's wages.

[36 : 39] And in truth, it is really very little. Two coins aren't going to make much difference. It will not help a missionary get his daily groceries.

It won't cover even the cost of a Sunday school book. book. But it is not nothing to Jesus. Why? Because Jesus sees it as her way of acknowledging that God is her Lord, not herself. It is an expression of her recognition that she is completely dependent on the Lord.

That's why she is free to give, even though she is poor. she doesn't trust the money. She trusts the Creator. That's what 21 verse 4 is getting at.

Compared to what others are giving, her contribution is negligible. But Jesus doesn't measure her life by comparing her to others. Jesus defines her life by how God sees her.

[37 : 50] You see, we often define ourselves in terms of what we can offer, don't we? We measure ourselves in terms of our background or our qualifications or yes, even our giving.

But if you think about it, does God really need all of that? Does he need our money or our time or our talents to build his kingdom? No, of course not.

He can achieve that without us. This is the God who said, let there be light and there was light. He doesn't need our offerings. But although he doesn't need them, he's delighted when we give all we have because what he sees is a faith embodied and he loves that.

indeed, one theologian that I listened to this week made a very interesting observation. He said, isn't it interesting that there are widows at the temple both at the beginning and at the end of Luke's gospel?

You see, back in Luke chapter 2, we learn about another widow, Anna. And how is Anna described? Well, we are really only told two big things about her.

[39 : 09] she is faithful in praying and worshipping, and she gets to meet Jesus. Just those two things. Now, from a worldly perspective, is that significant?

Not really. She didn't give large amounts to charity, she didn't invent some world-changing technology. She's a nobody. But to God, she is somebody significant enough to get a mention in the Bible, because she is clearly someone with a heart for God.

You see, in the end, we don't catch God's attention by our capacity or our achievements or our good intentions. That is not what he's ultimately warned over by.

All he wants is a heart that has met Jesus and is now willing to give their all to Jesus. And that is what both Anna and this widow models.

And that is what Jesus wants. Our hearts. That's how we are to regard him as Lord. And when we give him that, even if it is in the form of just two copper coins, he notices.

[40 : 31] Jesus so my friends, we will give our all. And I want to encourage us today that we can because Jesus is the Lord who has given his life for us.

The one who has given us all we have is the one to whom we can give our all. For Jesus, look at us when we were poor, helpless, with nothing to give.

And he didn't ask what we could offer because that's not how his kingdom works. Instead, he simply loved us all the way to the cross and now that he has risen again, he says, come, give your life for me, the king greater than even David, all the way into the resurrection age.

this, my friends, is God's word to us today. May he use it to make our hearts burn. Let's pray.

Father, as we come this morning, help us to rejoice in the truth of the resurrection. Help us to rejoice in the truth that in Christ we have a future that is far, far, far greater than we could ever imagine.

[42 : 01] And help us to live in light of that resurrection. Help us to live knowing that Jesus Christ is our risen Lord and help us, with the help of your Holy Spirit, to give everything that we have to give our all, not to be defined by the things of this world, but to be defined by our relationship with you.

All this we pray in the name of Christ. Amen.