

Wednesday's Gospel: God of the Living, Not the Dead

Gospel for Wednesday in the 9th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 12:18-27)

Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the wife, and raise up children for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no children; and

the second took her, and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; and the seven left no children. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.”

Jesus said to them, “Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

Commentary

It is only natural to wonder what life will be like after the resurrection. It is so mysterious to us that the most normal way to try to explain it is by making use of what we experience here and now. But as Paul reminds us: “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (*1 Cor* 2:9). The Apostle claims to have been caught up into heaven and to have heard ineffable words: “things that cannot be told, which man may not utter” (*2 Cor* 12:4). For what can a “carnal” person, that is, a person who is not yet “spiritual,” who does not allow himself to be instructed by the Spirit, understand about the things of God? (cf. *1 Cor* 3:1-3).

Everything we experience here in this world tells us something about the life of glory. And yet, the newness

that awaits us, “see, I make all things new” (*Rev* 21:5) – that glory completely surpasses our understanding: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (*Rom* 8:18). Can we truly speak about the “perfect man,” who has attained “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (cf. *Eph* 4:13)? And yet, how easy it is to make the greatest things petty, to speak trivially of the highest realities!

The Sadducees ask Jesus a question that, in their opinion, shows that belief in the resurrection is absurd. To do so, they make use of the Mosaic Law (cf. *Deut* 25:5-6; *Gen* 38:8). And Jesus responds by using the same Law to tell them that they have not understood it properly (cf. *Ex* 3:6). For those who do not want to believe, the texts are no obstacle, because they can always be twisted to make

the words say what one wants, while ignoring others. Today's Gospel passage brings to mind these words: "But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away" (2 Cor 3:14).

Turning our eyes to Christ, opening our heart to Him through faith, transforms us. In Christ we see the wisdom and power of the living God. Only his Spirit is able to open our heart and our understanding. How important it is to get to know the Holy Spirit in order to open ourselves to the mysteries of God and base our lives on them!

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