

# Hanging Out With Jesus: Helping People Who Are Mistaken About God

*Matthew 22:23-33, Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-40*

So how are we doing on the \$1 fines, men? How many of you spoke to someone this week and asked them a question about their spiritual journey? All right, that's great! And if you didn't have that opportunity, don't be embarrassed but raise your hand. All right, so you'll be responsible to put a \$1 fine in that jar back there. All grace, all honor system.

Well, good morning, men! So I'm very excited about our Bible Study this morning, but first we want to go ahead and do a shout out to a group that's been meeting for a couple of years in central Kansas. The group is the Zoar Men's Bible Study, they meet at the Zoar Mennonite Brethren Church in Inman, KS. Jim Thiessen is their leader, and they are 8-10 men that meet on Saturday's at 7:00am. There's a picture of the "Band of Brothers" as they call themselves. They start with an I am second testimony video and then roll into the video Bible Study. So I wonder if you would join me in giving these men a big, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome? One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we're glad to have you with us!

The series we're in is *Hanging Out With Jesus*. I told this story so long ago that most of you probably weren't here, and those of you who were here probably wouldn't remember it anyway. There was this guy in Chicago. He had a business trip down here to the Orlando area in the middle of the summer. He made his arrangement for the business hotel in downtown Orlando for the beginning of the week, and then he realized that he and his wife had not been on a vacation in quite some time. So, he had the idea well, maybe I could also book another hotel down in the resort area for the end of the week, and then have my wife join me. Sure enough, he's able to make the arrangements, so he came to Orlando, finished up his business, and was done a day early. He had a bright idea, I wonder if I can move down to the resort hotel a day early? Sure enough, he was able to do that. So he's all checked in, and then he realized his wife didn't know where he was, so he decided to send her an email. Unfortunately he got two of the digits mixed up and so instead of sending an email to his wife in Chicago, he actually sent an email to a woman in Detroit who's husband had just died. And so, the family came home from the funeral and went into the kitchen. The widow went up to her bedroom computer to see what kind of emails and condolences may have arrived. She let out a shriek and passed out on the floor. The family rushed in, and there on the computer screen was this message: Dear wife, I arrived yesterday afternoon and am starting to get settled in. Preparing for your arrival tomorrow afternoon. P.S. It's really hot down here!

It's interesting how what seems like relatively small mistakes can have very big consequences! That's what we're going to talk about today, today's message is *Helping People Who Are Mistaken About God*, who have made mistakes about God. There are many examples today of this. People make mistakes such as they believe that they can lose their salvation, and there are consequences, huge consequences when someone doesn't have an assurance of their salvation. All kinds of errors, lot's of Christians believe that it's okay to get divorces, it's okay to live together before your marriage. A lot of Christians believe in same sex marriage, a lot of Christians don't believe there's a hell, a lot of Christians are not sure what heaven is all about. A lot of people who profess faith in Jesus believe that even though they are Christians, that there are many ways, many roads to get to heaven, that lead to God. There are people who feel it's okay to be a bad neighbor. There are people who don't think it's important to make disciples, that now that they have their faith, they're free to go and do what they want. These errors, these mistakes have very huge consequences and that's what we're going to talk about today.

As you know, we're an application oriented Bible Study, so we're going to look at a story from the Gospels, it's the story of the Sadducees coming to Jesus with a question. But we, being application oriented, what we want to do is to take that story and look at the theology, doctrine and history. But then we're most interested in bringing it forward very quickly and looking at how it can apply to us. The purpose of our message today really is the title, *How Can We Help People That Are Mistaken About God* and so I want to give you something to take away that will hopefully help you help others and possibly help yourself as well.

The first thing we want to look at is the text which is about making mistakes and that is at Matthew 22:23. Let's read this:

That same day the Sadducees (now that same day is Tuesday of holy week. Tuesday is the day where Jesus engages with religious leaders who have all kinds of questions. Who are Sadducees? The Sadducees were a religious sect in the nation of Israel and they were the top leaders in the Sanhedrin, they were the big guns. They're not Pharisees, they're a different breed all together), who say there is no resurrection (and that would be the mistake), came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him (Moses did in fact say that. They are students of the Mosaic law, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Then they ask him this question which was a bit of a riddle). Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

So teaching at the time was that she would be the wife of the first brother in heaven. Somewhere toward the end of Acts it talks about how the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, they did not believe in angels, and they did not believe in the spirit. So that's where they're coming from, but you

notice here in Jesus' response that he does not attack them as he attacks the Pharisees because the Sadducees are not hypocrites. The Pharisees are a bunch of legalists who have sorts of rules and regulations they want you to follow but they don't want to follow themselves. You may know religious people like that today. The Sadducees are more like cultural Christians. They have an outward show of Godliness but they are also intermingled with the worldly ways. So we would call them lukewarm Christians were they Christians and some of course were. So Sadducees were a bit of a different breed. The text goes on here at verse 29:

Jesus replied, "You are in error (or you are mistaken, or have been misled, gone astray, those would all be synonyms) because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven (you see Jesus knows all about the Sadducees, he knows they don't believe in angels. Verse 31). But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' (this took place at the burning bush)? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

### **Making Mistakes**

What was the cause of their mistake? He says you are in error, and he says that you are in error because you thought the Bible was silent about the resurrection and the Bible is not silent about the resurrection. That and referring to that part of the scriptures in which they refer to themselves, the books of Moses, he goes right to the burning bush and points out that God said I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so I am the God of the living. There is a resurrection, Abraham is alive, Isaac is alive, Jacob is alive, Moses is alive, he appeared at the transfiguration with Elijah and Jesus. All of these people are alive, and so Jesus is helping to correct their error on that.

Also, with regard to marriage in general, revelation, Biblical revelation, is progressive. As such, Jesus gives a new teaching on marriage here that had never been heard before. He says that in heaven people will neither marry nor be given in marriage, they will be like angels in heaven. This doesn't mean that you will not have some kind of relationship with your spouse, but it will not be a marital relationship, and anybody who wants to push that much further will be moving into speculation, and I'm not going to do that as it is not the purpose of the message. But this is a new teaching on marriage, and then also there is a new teaching here on angels, that you are going to be like an angel. So whatever you read in the Bible about angels, that's what you're going to be like when you get to heaven. So we see there's quite a bit in there just from a doctrinal standpoint.

What is the cause of this mistake? Jesus says it right there, the reason that you are in error is that you do not know the scriptures, or you do not know what God is capable of. There is this thing called exegesis which is interpreting a text, but there's a new word I want to teach you today that's called eisegesis. Eisegesis is basically reading into the text what you want it to say. It's bringing your prejudices, your bias, your agenda, your presuppositions with you to the text so that instead of reading it to see what God is saying, you're reading it to find what you want it to say. We all do this, and that's a major cornerstone of cultural Christianity, deciding what you want and looking only for evidence to support your decisions. That's what's going on here. What is the result?

Jack Miller was a great man of God, he's been deceased now for about a decade or so. He used to go into churches as a consultant and he would look around and say why is there such little power here? A church is a collection of believers, the body of Christ. When you look around in this particular group, there's a lot of power. But in other groups, there isn't. Why is that? Jesus tells us why. You're mistaken because you do not know the scriptures and you do not know what God is capable of! You do not know the power of God, what God can do! Is God healing in your life? Is God transforming the people around you? Is God meeting your needs? Is God giving you joy, is he lifting the spirit of oppression off of you? If he is not, you are mistaken about what God is capable of! This is not an ancient book, this is a real book! I wish I had the time to tell you but we had five visitors last week at the first timers table, and every single one of them had a supernatural story of God intervening in their lives! It was amazing! I've never had a day like that before! All five of them had a supernatural experience with God! It was phenomenal! God is alive! God is at work! God is all powerful! We know a lot about that and how that works when we know the scriptures of God.

What I most want you to see in this passage is how Jesus handled himself. Ephesians 4:15, speaking the truth in love. He is speaking the truth here in love. You are in error. When an angry person becomes a preacher, they preach angry. When a loving person becomes a preacher, they preach in a loving way. So you can preach this angry or you can preach this loving, but we know that God is love. So when Jesus preaches this to the Sadducees, he's always doing it in love. That's his baseline, love but also truth. So that's why Paul says we should be speaking the truth in love. There's this ethos that Jesus brings to it, he's not trying to win an argument. Jesus is trying to win souls. We had this as a Big Idea, win souls not arguments, because Jesus is wanting these men to see they've made an error and make the correction. But you notice he's not appealing simply to the emotions, he's appealing to the truth in love. If you ever hear somebody preach this angrily, run the other way. If I ever do that, come see me, because I wouldn't want to be that way. Jesus is in this to win souls, not arguments.

Since this is an application oriented Bible Study, the Big Idea today is going to be a question that I want each of us to ponder. **What's your best way to help someone who is mistaken?** All of us have people in our lives, coworkers, neighbors, family members, who have mistaken ideas about God. They are in error. By the way, errors are not necessarily sins. Just because somebody believes incorrectly, that does not mean that it's a sin, that simply means they've made a mistake that needs to be corrected. Now at some point it may become a sin, depending on what it is, but somebody who lacks an assurance of salvation

isn't sinning because they're worried that they're going to lose their salvation, they're just wrong. They're just in error, and the solution for that is to help them understand the scriptures and what God is capable of, giving them this eternal life without the risk of losing it. Your best way to help someone who is mistaken in that way is to think how you are able to do that. Jesus is counting on us, you are his method. Men are his method. Jesus has essentially said you're in charge until I get back, therefore go and make disciples. So becoming and making disciples, that's what we're supposed to be all about.

### **Talking To People Who Are Mistaken**

How do we talk to people who are mistaken? Let's talk about some of the reasons people make mistakes from a practical standpoint. Sometimes people are making mistakes because they are acting on their feelings, or they've had an experience, a bad experience, maybe with a parent or in a church. They're in error because they don't know the scriptures, the power God is capable of, and they're relying on their feelings and emotions, how they've been hurt in some way. Maybe it's something they've heard in a coffee shop, in the gym, or from a coworker. Maybe they've heard a bad teaching somewhere. The upshot is that they don't know the scriptures, they're not making a decision on them, but on hearsay, their own best thinking.

One of our leaders told me he has a weekly small group and they are studying a book all about God and the Bible. He said the men who read the chapter and come to the group, their lives are changing. The men who don't read the chapter and come to the group, their lives are stagnant. They don't have a clue about why their lives are not changing. It's so obvious that if anyone is going to see their lives transformed, it is going to require an investment of time, interest and attention to make that happen. You're going to have to actually get involved!

I'm supposed to be talking to about people who are mistaken, so let me get back to that. The attitude of this we've already seen in Jesus, speaking the truth in love. John 8:31-32 says this, if you hold to my teachings then you are really my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. So that's why we want to go to the scriptures because it's the truth that will set people free. When we abide in these teachings, that's when we are disciples of Jesus. So the truth piece of speaking the truth in love is extremely important, but also the love piece is very important. John 13:34-35, Jesus says a new command I give to you, love one another. All men will know you are disciples if you perfect your theology? If you get your doctrine right, everything's going to be cool. Well actually, that's about what John 8:31-32 does say. It says if you hold to my teachings then you are really my disciples and will know the truth, so yes that is true. But there's the other side to it in John 13:34-35 and that is all men will know you are my disciples if you love one another. So truth and love working together, you see that in the way Jesus talks to everybody! Maybe excepting these hypocritical Pharisees, he gets a little ticked with them. We're getting close to the seven woes in Matthew 23 from the southern steps of the temple. That's a little different. But the basic attitude here is don't get theologically OCD on people. When you

do, what are you doing? You're being legalistic, you are exchanging the grace of Christ for beating people up with some sort of theological bat.

Let's turn to Galatians 6. We want to talk to people who are mistaken, in error, who have been deceived and misled. We want to talk to those people, telling them the truth, but in love. Even if it's not a mistake, even if it's a sin, we still want to talk to them in the same way. Galatians 6:1-2 says brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. What's the law of Christ? Love one another as I have loved you. Lovingly restore brothers who have fallen into sin. You know the old cliché, the Christian army is the only army that shoots its wounded? You see this happening all the time. That's not the way we're supposed to help people who have fallen into a mistake, even if it is a sin.

Now the approach. 1 Peter 3. This is the classic apologists verse. 1 Peter 3:15 is kind of like the way to do it. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within you. But do this with gentleness and respect... and you can read on from there. This is the approach that we use when we see somebody who is making a mistake. When somebody has bad theology, somebody worships angels or whatever it is they are doing, don't blow them away! Speak the truth in love, that's the approach. We see it also in 2 Timothy 2:24, and the Lord's servant must not quarrel. How many of us get into arguments over what people believe, fellow Christians or non-believers as well? Instead he must be kind to everyone and able to teach, nor resentful. Those who oppose him, he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. We're not battling against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and rulers of this dark world, etc. It's a spiritual battle they're in. They've been taken captive, and we're the ones that help set them free, but we must do it with gentleness and respect and kindness, otherwise we will alienate and damage them. Show men the truth in love.

I have a hard time with this, I'm so much smarter than you, you know? You tell me some mistake and I just want to say you idiot! How could you be so stupid! Don't you know what the Bible says about that? No, I'm not really like that, but I could be, if I didn't know the scriptures and I didn't know what God is capable of. So you can see how well meaning people could just blow people out of the water. The application here is what is it that you have experienced? How is that you have seen what God is capable of that you can talk about? What is the dunamis of God, the power of God, that you have experienced? What is the logos of God, the word of God, that you have experienced that you can talk about and share with others? That becomes a tool for you. The Big Idea today, **what's your best way to help someone who is mistaken?**

**The Disciple's Operating Manual**

Then just a final piece today, a word for talking about this Bible. This Bible is the disciple's operating manual. Every machine, car, and computer has some kind of an operating manual. When used according to the rules provided in the manual, everything works like it's supposed to.

One of our members was telling me a story about an NFL chaplain. He said that we are the worst team in the NFL. But even if you are the worst player, which would make you the worst player on the worst team, which would make you the worst player in the whole world! But even if you are the worst player on our team, you still have to know every play in the play book or you're not going to be on the team. Now, God does not expect you to play a perfect game, but he does expect you to be able to recognize when a mistake has been made. The admonition for us is let's become so acquainted with our disciple's operating manual that we don't have trouble finding where 1 Peter 3 is. Let's understand what's in it, and then when people do make mistakes, we'll have an answer for this question, **what's your best way to help someone who is mistaken?** Make sense? Let's pray!

### **Closing Prayer**

Our dearest father, Lord, thank you so much for this day. Thank you so much for these men. Thank you so much for all the men who join us online as well. Lord, I lift up all of us to you as your servants who do desire to be disciple makers and to help people who are in error and making mistakes. Lord, we know that to do that we need to have our method, our own plan, our own answer to the question **what's your best way to help someone who is mistaken**, we need to have a plan. So I just pray, God, that you would help each of us think through our plan, whether it's the ministry of giving books or inviting to this Bible Study or inviting to their Church or connecting them with someone who can answer their questions. Whatever it is, Lord, may it never happen again in our lifetime that we see someone who is mistaken and we leave them to go about their own way. Lord, help us to reach out. Help us to become disciples by making disciples. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen!