

Pentecost 25 – November 10, 2013

Text: Luke 20:27ff

Theme: "Don't Treat Jesus Like a Chump"

The Gospel says that they no longer dared to ask him questions. Why? Because he had just undone their whole ridiculous theology with one sentence. Jesus loves sinners, but he will not suffer fools. If you want to make the rules for your own salvation, good luck with that, but don't bother Jesus. He only does salvation one way, on the cross and it has to be a free gift.

I used to argue with fools who wanted to dream up their own theologies and promulgate them among their peers. I thought I was defending God but I finally learned after years of bloody battle that it was I who I was defending. I was scared that if these igits were right, I might be wrong and if I were wrong, I was a chump because I had spent 8 years and thousands of dollars studying Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Systematics, Isagogics and Ecclesial History and all they had done was read a couple Reader's Digest articles and the latest TV preacher's handbook to successful living! I was afraid that if they didn't respect God, then they didn't respect me and then I learned not to care.

You might notice that if you ask me a question about God, I will strive to give you the best answer I can, and even follow up later when I have time to further research your question. But if you start telling me what you feel about something, I just nod and smile. Oh

really? Is that what you feel? How interesting. I no longer feel the need to defend Jesus against ignorant musings. He's a big boy.

The Sadducees tried to make a chump out of Jesus with their ridiculous, contrived story about some woman who went through 7 brothers. All they were attempting to prove was what they wanted to believe, that there was no resurrection from the dead or afterlife. This was a doctrine that they had made up, and they were presuming to teach the Son of God with their clever little questions.

They did not like the resurrection from the dead. If there was a resurrection from the dead, then all of their earthly power and accomplishments were not worth very much. If I stress, strive and sacrifice everyone around me on the altar of my own success, and then one of you gets to be a prince or a princess in the same kingdom as me, THAT'S NOT FAIR! Why should you, who went to your kids ball games instead of working extra hours get the same reward as me? Why should you, who gave up "me time," personal advancement and vanity for a faithful, joyful family get to be equal to me in some mythical afterlife? I did nothing but strive to be better than you! Why shouldn't I, who kept all of the rabbinical rules and never missed a prescribed sacrifice on a prescribed day not have a higher seat than you?

Jesus undid them with quiet, simple logic. Really? When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and referred to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – why were they referenced in the present tense? They had been physically dead for centuries? Was God just mixed up? Did he lose track of the fact that they had all died? Or did he speak of them in the present because they were all still very much alive?

Don't try to make a chump out of Jesus. Sit down, shut up and listen. We don't understand everything he says but that is why he says it over and over again in his Word, the liturgy and the hymns and actually enters us in his Body and Blood to help us grasp ideas that are too big for our tiny brains. He is amazing. We will never fully grasp him but we can always learn more about him and grow closer to him, if we quit arguing with him, whining to him and just open our arms and our minds and receive his gifts.