

The Controversy of Abortion

Matthew 22:15-46

Introduction: It takes great wisdom to navigate through certain conversations, and to talk about certain subjects. Jesus exhibits supreme wisdom in the midst of controversy. The passage consists in four sections with each section addressing a question. Jesus' opponents ask the first three questions. Jesus himself turns the tables and asks his opponents the last question. We learn much about navigating through the tumultuous waters of abortion in our day as we observe Jesus interacting over the difficult issues of his own day. We will focus on four principles distilled from the four sections.

I. Some Things are for God Alone (15-22)

Jesus affirms the legitimacy of government, even secular government. It is right and practical at times to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." However, some things are not to be given to anyone one but God alone.

II. Some Things are Essential [Non-negotiable] (23-33)

We have here a case of one-issue politics! In this case, the resurrection was the one issue that compelled the Sadducees. Jesus does not back down from the issue as he comes out strong in favor of the resurrection. In doing so Jesus teaches us to not shrink back from taking a stand on the life and death issues of our own day.

How can heaven be better if there is no marriage there?

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. (CS Lewis, Miracles)

In verse 29 Jesus identifies the root problem of the Sadducees in their rejection of the resurrection: "you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God!"

III. Some Things Cannot Be Separated (34-40)

Now the Pharisees come to question Jesus about the law, about the OT Scriptures, to see if perhaps they can ensnare him. They question him, "Which is the greatest law?" This is the third question we have looked at and Jesus' answer is to love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. He then adds a second commandment which he says is like the first. The second command is to love your neighbor as yourself. Ultimately, these two things (love for God and love for your neighbor) cannot be separated. Our concern for the protection of the unborn child is directly connected to our love for God.

Genesis 1:26-27 ESV

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 9:5-6 ESV

5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

"One of Satan's devices to draw the soul into sin is to present the bait, and to hide the hook; to present the golden cup, and to hide the poison; to present the sweet, and the pleasure, but hide from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow." Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

James 3:8-9 ESV (emphasis added)

8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people **who are made in the likeness of God.**

Matthew 5:21-22 ESV

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'

22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

IV. Some Things Must be Accepted by Faith (41-46)

Now Jesus turns the tables and asks his opponents a question. The question itself is addressed to the Pharisees. The question ("Who is the Christ?") is asked in a way to direct the answer. "Whose son is he?" Jesus knew they would respond, 'he is the son of David.' By this they meant he was the one who

would come to sit on the throne of David and fulfill promises given to David. He followed David and in a sense is a second David fulfilling all that was promised to David. But Jesus reveals in his use of Psalm 110 that their understanding of what that meant was completely inadequate. Jesus is once again showing and teaching that the Messiah was so much more than they every anticipated and that he, as the Messiah, was so much more than they ever imagined.

Colossians 3:10 ESV

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Conclusion: With the eyes of faith we are enabled by God to see Jesus as the Christ. This life changing personal knowledge is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. This is the goal of our lives as Christians (to know and glorify Him) and also the ultimate goal of our controversial conversations.