

Sermon Discussion Guide




“The God of the Living”

Matthew 22:23-40

Ray Cortese, May 16 & 17, 2015

Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Matthew 22:23-40. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 When was the last time you thought about life after death? Discuss the following quote by Stephen Hawking’s wife: "However far-reaching our intellectual achievements ... without God there is only isolation and despair, and the human race is a lost cause."
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

THE GOD OF THE LIVING: TRANSCENDENT TRUTH

- 3 *Christianity evokes hostility*. How have you experienced hostility as a North American Christian? How is the hostility we experience here different from the hostility experienced by Christians in other parts of the world?

- 4 *Christianity declares there is truth.* How does knowing that there is truth, moral right and wrong, make a difference in the way you live your life?
- 5 *Christianity transcends labels.* Why is Christian neither a liberal nor a conservative? What other cultural labels does Christianity transcend?

THE GOD OF THE LIVING: TRANSCENDENT LOVE

- 6 What was God trying to communicate when he said, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? What did Ray mean when he said, “Our relationship with God never goes past tense”?
- 7 How does the children’s story, *The Runaway Bunny*, illustrate the passionate love of God for us?

THE GOD OF THE LIVING: TRANSCENDENT GLORY

- 8 What do you think heaven will be like? Why will there be no marriage in heaven?
- 9 Read and discuss the following quote by C.S. Lewis.

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. 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 which 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.
- 10 Do you believe in the power of God? How do you need His power in your life?

Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?