

Luke 20:27-38

27 Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him 28 and asked him a question, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; 30 then the second 31 and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. 32 Finally the woman also died. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.”

34 Jesus said to them, belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; 35 but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36 Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. 37 And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.”

Luke 20:27-38,

These Sadducees think they are pretty slick. They have taken a law prescribed in the book of Deuteronomy

that says a brother shall marry his deceased brother's widow for the purposes of preserving his brother's blood line,

and concocted this scenario to refute Jesus' understanding of the resurrection that they don't believe in.

Well the Sadducees asked which one of these characters would the woman be stuck with in heaven.

Now, ladies, lets stop and think a minute. How many of your husbands would still be single if you were faced with the prospect of having to marry your husband's brother?

If that had been the case for Laura I would have been single all these years.

This ancient Hebrew law brings new meaning to the saying that when you marry someone you don't just marry them,

you marry the whole family.

This passage from Luke is one of the gospel passages offered by our lectionary to speak to the festival of the church we call All Saints Sunday and observe this weekend.

This passage speaks so clearly about the resurrection, and about our God who is the God not of the dead, but the God of the living.

In Jesus day some believed in the resurrection and some didn't, just as we find today.

Clearly Jesus knew there would be a resurrection and his would be the first.

It is this promise of resurrection that gives each of us hope for our own life, and certainly on occasions like today when we remember those we have lost,

hope for them, and peace in our hearts that comes with the certainty that they live,

and continue in God's care.

And I want to be very clear about the word "continues" here, for you see, this eternal life that Jesus refers to through resurrection

is a life that begins before death comes to you,

it begins in your baptism.

For all of us eternal life begins with baptism and is a part of our reality throughout our life from that moment on.

The question becomes, then, how do you live eternal life on this side of this little thing called death.

Death is the end of many things for those who have died,

and for us who remain on this side of that event when someone dear to our hearts passes.

But, death isn't the end of everything, nor is it the end of the things that are most important to us.

Often times when you think about death it paints a dark picture, sometimes you can't see anything in the darkness of your life.

But, I was granted a new understanding of that darkness while I was at the Conference on Ministry just a couple of weeks ago that when presented was even poetic.

I am sure it will lose that poetic character in my retelling this story but:

We had a wonderful musician who is really more than a musician. In his music David proclaims the gospel,

he conveys the heart of the message of God's word through music presentation.

During one of our worship services he was playing a song on the piano while talking to us about the light and the dark and reminded us that we all spend time in the dark,

but that even when we do there is still light.

He put it this way,

God let our darkness be the darkness of the seed buried in the earth that sprouts into the light and becomes a blossom in this world;

Let our darkness be the darkness of the baby in the womb that is given life and is born into the light to give joy to the world;

Let our darkness be in the grave from where we will rise into the light of Christ in our own resurrection

because the darkness of Jesus' death becomes the darkness of the tomb,

and the darkness of the tomb becomes the light of his resurrection.

Because he is raised, so we shall be raised.

Every darkness you can imagine is overcome by the light of our Lord Jesus Christ and his resurrection,

because he has defeated death forever, and it has no power over us who believe.

Your loved ones who have passed now live in the light of Christ and many things have changed for them I cannot even imagine.

But we hear from the scriptures the promise that,

“...the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more...”

This episode of Jesus and the Sadducees gives us enough hope to live in,

and enough hope to face death that comes to us all.

Death is the end of many things but whatever remains on the other side of death it is not the end of God who is immortal,

yesterday, today and tomorrow, Alpha and Omega,
beginning and end,

God, not of the dead but of the living on both sides of
death.

There are many questions left unanswered about the
resurrection.

This gospel story doesn't provide the roadmap of the new
creation, or how to get there.

but, the assurance, the promise that all who have gone
before us, and all of us are and will be alive,

and that is enough to provide the hope we need.

I believe a part of what remains on both sides of death is the
spirit of those who have passed before us, your loved ones.

It is alive in you.

It is alive in all the people whose lives they touched
through the memories each holds of them.

Yes, we have questions, but in this story we are invited to trust
that in God all our questions are put to rest.

You will always remember your life with those who have passed
on,

the joys and the struggles, laughs and tears, the love shared
through it all.

And this is our command in the meantime before we are all
joined together in the resurrection,

grto love.

And it is Jesus' love that is to define your life through your baptism

until the day you are fully united with him in a resurrection like his.

Amen