

Luke 20:27-40

You might have heard of the musical, “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.” But have you ever heard of the one called: One Bride for Seven Brothers? Everyone dies in the end. The Sadducees concocted this absurd story in their attempt to show how ridiculous was the teaching of the resurrection. “*Whose wife will she be in the resurrection,*” they mockingly ask Jesus, “*for all seven (brothers) had her as wife?*”

It’s scary to think that these Sadducees were men of influence among the Jewish people. The Sadducees were materialists. They denied the existence of spirits and angels, and they denied the teaching of the resurrection from the dead.

What should be disturbing to us is that their descendants are teaching our children in college classrooms and elsewhere. Many, if not most professors, deny the same things as the Sadducees. Will our children and grandchildren be so well grounded in the Scriptures that they will be able to withstand the onslaught against them? One college professor can unravel, in a few lectures, what we think is a well-tied knot. No wonder God insists that children be taught the truths of His Word, and be brought to His house, regularly and faithfully. He wants no loose knots for the devil to easily unravel.

And this is why marriage is for us in this age but not for the age to come. There is no marriage in heaven. Jesus says so here. I know...in a way that's sad. But can you imagine? A 50th wedding anniversary here is really something. But if there was marriage in heaven, fifty years there would be the blink of an eye. “Oh, this is our 50,000,000th anniversary.” And on and on. It would never end. God knows best. There is something much better in heaven than romantic love.

There is no marriage there, says Jesus, because “*they cannot die anymore.*” In heaven no babies are born and no one dies. Heaven’s population will always remain the same. The gift of marriage is for this age, Jesus says, and many blessings are attached to it, not the least of which is that husband and wife, as father and mother, raise their children in the love and nurture of the Lord. Jesus deals with the Sadducees of our day through mom and dad. By their example, by their teaching the Bible and the love of God to their children, by their faithful attendance with their children in the house of the Lord and at His table, no modern Sadducee can unravel that knot, for it is tied securely by Christ Himself.

What the Sadducees mock in our text is at the very heart of our faith. If there is no resurrection from the dead, writes St. Paul, then “*our faith is meaningless...and then not even Christ has been raised from the dead.*” If the Sadducees and those professors are right, again St. Paul writes, then we who have hope in Christ “*are of all people most to be pitied.*”

But friends, your faith is not in vain. Jesus puts the Sadducees in their place. He shuts them up with one passage from Scripture; one word really. The Sadducees have no answer for Jesus, and they never approach Him again.

That one word is *am*. Jesus deals with the Sadducees with what Moses writes in the passage about the burning bush. God says to Moses, not “I was...” but “*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*”

That present tense word, “*I am*” means everything. You see, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died centuries before Moses. Yet if they were actually dead, God would have said, “I was their God.” But He says to Moses, “*I am* their God.” “*He is not God of the dead,*” says Jesus, “*but of the living.*” No one in heaven is dead. Don’t ever speak of them in the past tense. For all in heaven, says Jesus, “*live to God.*” Present tense.

Everything about God cries out “life!” He is the living God. His words are living words that create life. His baptism for us is living water. The living Christ comes into us through bread and wine in the Sacrament. God is love, He is light, He is goodness, He is also life. And apart from God there is only death. That was us at one time. We were born “*dead in our trespasses and sins,*” says the apostle, “*but God made us alive together with Christ.*”

The evidence of the resurrection of the dead is in your baptism. For there you died with Christ and were raised with Him. Read Romans 6. Since God raised you from death to life with Jesus in your baptism, how will He not also raise your body from death on the Last Day? He will. This is His promise.

But is it for me? If we had perfect faith, I could end the sermon here. In fact, we wouldn’t even need a sermon if we had perfect faith. But we don’t. We need assurance, comfort; we need forgiveness.

Now maybe you are/were the perfect parent, but I’m not, and I wasn’t. I tried to raise our children as God demanded of me. But I failed...so often. Did I do enough? Was I always a good example? Will they be prepared to face the onslaught of today’s Sadducees against them? Did I tie the knot too loosely? Will the devil be able to unravel it? In all of these, and so much more, I failed. And if you failed with me, then hear this comforting word. God will preserve our children in Christ not because of us, but in spite of us. Let’s begin now, if we are able, to do it God’s way. But if we are not able, we commend them to Him in prayer.

And know this for certain...God forgives you for all your failures. He forgives all your sins. If you were the best parent, or the worst parent, you are forgiven. Each and every one of you is forgiven. Christ suffered and died on the cross for you, too.

You have God’s promise in Christ that the resurrection awaits you. And because God made you alive with Christ in your baptism, you are able right now to live the resurrected life because He, my friend, tied the knot that joins you to Jesus. Amen.