

Message for Sunday, November 9, 2025

Scripture Luke 20: 27-38

Message Title: Debate

Welcome

Announcements

Giving Options, special offering for the month of November is The Emergency

Assistance Fund, Interfaith Workshops are Sundays at 2PM-This week is

Buddhism, United Women of Faith Tuesday, November 18th at 1PM,

Thanksgiving Potluck sign up in the foyer, Advent Study starts November 30th

at 2PM in Verde Hall, Help decorate the church on Wednesday, Dec 3 at 9AM,

Toys for Sonoyta sign up is in the foyer.

Fellowship of Love

Bidding Farewell to Angels Attic

Song

Call to Worship

L: Inhale the bounty of God's peace.

P: Splendor is a gift of the presence of God.

L: Serenity is the treasure that comes from God's Spirit.

P: Through the love of God, we find our rest.

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L: Now exhale all that resists the blessings of God.

P: Justice and kindness ring from the heart of God.

Unison Prayer

Holy God, Sacred Serenity- the vibrations of our worry shake us to the core.

We want answers now, not tomorrow.

Our minds demand proof that all will be well.

We refuse to wait with peace and patience for certainty. We blame ourselves for calamities even when they are beyond our control.

We accuse you for mishaps, even when your hands has only loved us.

As the earth's roads crack below us, your sacred foundation makes us sturdy.

May your strength embolden us in times of trouble and distress, that we may move forward with hope. Amen.

Offering

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L: As we come to this time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

Special Music-Patricia Clark

Scripture: Luke 20:27-38 NRSV

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 a woman 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, "Those who 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

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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.”

Message: Debate

This scripture is going to take us a little bit of digging in order to understand it, so please bear with me today. You see this passage is not one that is easy to interpret for meaning in today’s context. What I mean by this is that some of you will look at it and say it is obviously about the resurrection and the after life because it plainly says that. That’s true, this passage is about that, and we will talk about it but that is not what is at stake in this passage for us today. If that were all that this story was about then why would we even get this story? Do we really need a story about people asking Jesus a question about the resurrection?

Let's go back in history a little bit. By Jesus' time there was a split into three camps in Judaism. Those three groups are the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Zealots. We aren't going to talk about the Zealots. They do play a role in Christian theological development, but they aren't here in this passage today. What we are going to talk about are the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Somewhere around 200 or 100 BCE there was a split in Judaism that resulted in these two groups and what it has to do with at first is scriptural inclusion and interpretation.

The Sadducees used only the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the bible as the rule of faith and law. These were the scriptures that were given by Moses and had been handed down. They were the law. The Pharisees on the other hand wanted to include other books, including a recent addition in that time period of the book of Daniel. Daniel was a new type of literature, combining wisdom literature, prophecy, and apocalypse. You see the Pharisees had a more liberal interpretation.

As a result of this there came to be a significant difference of interpretation and theological thought. The Pentateuch doesn't suggest a resurrection at all. However, the book of Daniel does. It becomes a part of

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common theological understanding, represented by the Pharisees. While the temple, represented by the Sadducees interpreted the law of Moses as not supporting the idea of a resurrection. If we fast forward to Jesus' time we see Jesus is in the same theological camp as the Pharisees. That there is a resurrection and our passage today is the recording of the only interaction Jesus had with the Sadducees in the Gospel of Luke.

I am someone who likes a good, spirited discussion. I've always enjoyed that, I like the idea of testing the metal of different ideas and seeing where there are weaknesses in those ideas. I've always enjoyed that activity. What I don't enjoy is someone who discusses things in bad faith. You have all experienced this, it happens often in one of two ways. One, the person poses a question that is intentionally misleading, and they want to trap you. This is known as a 'gotcha' question. Or the person talks down or over you. There are many examples of this today. Ben Shapiro, Matt Walsh, Bill O'Reilly, and Sean Hannity. All of them operate in this manner in discussions. They ask bad faith questions, intended to catch people who don't have the depth of knowledge, with no real intent to learn or understand.

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The Sadducees come to Jesus with just such a question. A question based in their world view, the view of only Moses' writings being the official writings of the religion and posit a question based on that. Their question is founded within the law, the expected actions of the Jewish people. The bad faith part comes at the end "who will be her husband in the resurrection?" In other words, do you see how stupid your position is? Now Jesus, Jesus gives a masterful response. Basically, he meets them where they are at. He meets them in the Pentateuch, and he points out a flaw in their argument. Look at verse 37 and 38 –

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.

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³⁸ Now he is God not of the dead but of the living, for to him all of them are alive."

You see, Jesus points out that basically every time God talks about the patriarchs, you know Abraham, Issac, and Jospeh, that God does it in the

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present tense. In other words, to God these guys are still alive, so how can you say you know that the resurrection is stupid?

Now I could talk about this as evidence of the resurrection but again I don't think that is the lesson we are to pull from this passage. I think the lesson is two-fold. One is do not argue in bad faith, and two we don't really know what the age to come looks like, so stop trying to define it.

I think Jesus is telling us, at least in part, to not be like the Sadducees and argue in bad faith. Instead, we should be humble and learn from one another. All the "debaters" I listed earlier are seen as great debaters in certain circles. Some are even seen as people who are defending the faith, whether that faith is Christian or Jewish. I think they miss the point, they aren't humble before God learning from one another and growing in faith. Instead, they are "defending" a dead faith, not one that is listening to God and growing, like the Pharisees demonstrated.

The second lesson is that we focus too much on trying to figure out what the world to come will look like. Notice I said world to come, the alternate is age to come. This is the terminology that Jesus uses, it is the terminology of ambiguity. It is intentionally not Heaven by Jesus, and I think that is important.

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We want certainty in the face of eternity but instead Jesus points us to faith.

Humble ourselves before God, before eternity, realize you can't figure it all out and that you can't trick people into believing the right thing. But what you can do is be faithful with what you have, to follow faithfully seeking to see and hear God in the world around you and in others. That is what will make you a child of the next age and not one of this age. A spirit willing to listen to God and follow Gods leading. Do you think God needs you to defend Gods' self? Is God not big enough to prove Gods' self? You are called to humbly follow and sometimes realize you don't have all the answers. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Song

Benediction

Song