

Luke 20:27-40  
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost  
November 9, 2025

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Last week's All Saints festival pointed us to the Church Triumphant's endless Sabbath *rest* and the Church Militant's weekly *share* in that divine rest; but we also meditated last week on the truth that the All Saints festival "bends the knee" (so to speak) to Easter, as the soul at rest joyfully anticipates the body's resurrection and the life of the world to come. Therefore, as we said last week, All Saints begins a concluding season to the church year that focuses not just on *rest*, but on: Christ's return, the resurrection of the body, and thereafter the life everlasting.

This Sunday's reading may not be a direct focus on *Christ's return*, but it certainly begins a focus on the resurrection and the life everlasting. It's a fascinating text in that – unlike the parables anticipating Christ's return – this back and forth between Jesus and the Sadducees is not really one with a strong "Law" teaching or a strong "Gospel" proclamation. It really is more a discussion of what is

true about two doctrinal concepts, that we may meditate on (1) the truth of the resurrection and (2) the nature of marriage.

At first glance, this may seem an odd duo of topics, and we may interpret the Sadducees trying to force together an unnatural and self-contradicting couplet, doing so with sinister intent to prove that the one – resurrection of the dead – doesn't actually exist. (As the text says, "The Sadducees, those who deny there is a resurrection." But Jesus not only untwists their pretzel logic, but gives us a deeper appreciation for how this supposed self-contradicting couplet is actually a divinely complementary couplet that proclaims the wonders of our God and his thoughtfulness toward His creation.

First, let's begin with how Jesus speaks of marriage. In our text, his comments seem to 'burst our bubble' when we speak of marriage as 'together forever' or 'happily ever after.' Jesus rather matter-of-factly says,

"The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore... and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

Now, as products of romanticism, we may instinctively recoil at this. Jesus plainly says marriage is for this age, that we are sons of this age and therefore make use of marriage in *this* age, but that, in *that* age – in the age of the resurrection, there will be no more marriage,

“for,” Jesus says, “they cannot die anymore... and are sons of God.”

That may not sound as romantic as marriage being “forever after.”

But meditate on the beauty of what this means:

It means that God very purposefully is considerate of providing for your daily life and planning good and noble and beautiful and lovely gifts for your daily life, even if they in and of themselves add nothing to *eternal* life.

We just studied in Galatians (in fact, comes/came up again in this morning’s class) that – in matters of justification – there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, *male and female*. NOT “male *nor* female,” as if we are sexless beings, but “male and female,” meaning: no earthly status – not even the status of “married” – adds or contributes to justification. Only *one* status matters for justification: “one who belongs to Christ.” Christ died for you, paid the price for your sins, and redeemed and purchased you unto himself, that, as the catechism says, “I may be his own.” That I may be one who belongs to Christ and, thus, justified by Him and saved in Him. Marriage contributes nothing to that... so that the status of married or single means *nothing* to whether you are “considered worthy to attain to that age” ... means *nothing* to whether you are a true child of God, sheep of Christ, or member of the Church. Your worth in the heavenly courts is not even found in the highest estate

of all creation in *this* world... for your worth is a matter of salvation and the life of the world to come.

But, that also very positively means that God knows how much marriage means for this creation: that He would *create* it as the highest estate, and that it would be the great estate that reflects and confesses the world's *redemption* in Christ's union with the Church, and that He would even use it for the benefit of our faith as husband and wife to point each other to eternity and raise children in the faith.

In fact, doesn't Christ even hint at the beautiful purpose of marriage in this life when he says it will no longer be needed in the resurrection because "they cannot die anymore." In other words, God uses marriage in this life as a repellent against, a warrior against death... for it is marriage that procreates the next generation and preserves life in the old creation while the passing generation prepares for its endless rest in anticipation of the resurrection into the new creation. You might even say, earthly marriage and its procreation *frustrates* Death this side of heaven, and Christ's marriage to His Church *defeats* Death in the resurrection. So this seemingly odd couplet of marriage and resurrection is truly a beautiful couple: earthly marriage and Christ's marriage. Christ's marriage brings us to the resurrection; earthly marriage wards off death's grip on creation by giving another generation of life. But when (the text says) "they cannot die anymore" then earthly

marriage is no longer needed, for life in the new creation will not be subject to Adam's fall.

Now, this is some deep thinking, and you may be tempted to say, "Wait a minute, if Jesus says marriage is no longer needed because 'they cannot die anymore,' but neither could they die in the perfection of Eden, yet God gave them marriage and procreation!" True. Because the perfect world had not yet been populated, and ended up never being populated in perfection. And so, what a blessing of God, that even in the shadows of the fall, God continues His plan to procreate and propagate His creation in advance of and with forethought to paradise restored.

Yet, this also means that your identity as a man or a woman is more than just a defining function. How often does our sex-crazed society argue that male and female are only distinctions of sexual function and sexual enjoyment. But, that we will **not** be given in marriage in the resurrection (for paradise will already be populated as God sees fit) and yet we *will* retain our identity as male and female (for God did not make you a generic human, but male or female... and Christ is not generically human, but true man forever... and God identifies himself as *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*)... that those very sex-specific identities remain in the resurrection shows that you are not merely a male or female for sexual function, but that God *knows* you as you – body and soul! He has created you to

be *you*, redeemed you for *your* sake, and loves you as the *you* He specifically knit in your mother's womb and loved *you*.

So then, the purpose of marriage is for this world... and, though it does not add to your salvation, one wonderful benefit is that it *does* point you to your salvation, as husbands and wives are always there pointing each other to Christ (that matters for more for the 50-60 years of marriage than does the sexual function or even the lifelong companionship, both of which are wonderful temporal benefits of marriage).

Yes, marriage's great confession is the movement from beings "sons of this age" to being "sons of God." That doesn't mean you aren't sons of God now – adopted into his family and heirs of heaven! But, Jesus implies that to be called "sons of God" is a term that finds its meaning and fulfillment in the resurrection. Hear Him again:

Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are *sons of God*, being sons of the resurrection.

There's that final phrase: "sons of God, sons of the resurrection." Didn't Jesus promise in the final beatitude last week that those persecuted for righteousness' sake *would* be called (future tense) – "they shall be called sons of God"? Now we see the connection. Those persecuted – even to the point of death – for the sake of the

Gospel will be called “sons of God”, being sons of *the resurrection* and heirs of eternal life.

So that brings us to meditate on the second doctrinal topic of this unique text: the resurrection itself and its importance in Christ’s promises and, thus, in our Christian hope.

The resurrection gets a lot of attention in the Scriptures; it’s confessed in each of the ancient creeds; and it’s a divine concept so often promised that we don’t often think we need to study it further. But it’s also somewhat elusive in that it’s hard to imagine it. *We* often think of it in terms either of Christ’s resurrection or in terms of hearing the promise so as to be comforted at the death of loved ones. But we have a hard time imagining the one-day, universal event of the resurrection, and especially have a hard time imagining it will one day come upon the earth in human time and history... maybe even in our lifetime!. So, it may seem somewhat odd to hear in our gospel reading a very matter-of-fact discussion about its very truth as a ‘given’ in God’s plans for the creation.

In other words, consider that Jesus speaks of it plainly – not in the afterglow of his own resurrection, nor in making glorious promises regarding our own – but just as plainly and matter-of-factly as he speaks of God’s designs at the beginning of creation: “In the beginning, God made them male and female,” he matter-of-factly says about a creation origin our generation vigorously rejects as myth.

So, just as you and I do not believe in the truth of Eden as if trying really hard to believe a myth, but we do so trusting the authority of Jesus' word, that He said that it was *true*... equally, we ought believe in the inevitability of the resurrection of all flesh, not as if trying really hard to believe a myth, but trusting the authority of Jesus' word, that He said that it was *true*. Do you believe Jesus' words about the holy Law? Or about Christian suffering? Or about His call to repentance? Don't you believe those words in part because Jesus speaks them so plainly that they just sound like 'a given'? Well, in our text, the resurrection is 'a given'... spoken of not by one who himself has even yet experienced it, but spoken of by One who foreknows the factual certainty of God's promises for His creation... including the fact of "*the* resurrection" (notice, he doesn't speak of his own, but speaks of *the* resurrection as a truth larger than his own, even if that truth depends upon His sacrificial death and flows from his own triumph over the grave as the firstfruits of "*the* resurrection.")

So, this is the first thought on this topic the text gives us – the resurrection is no Christian myth. Instead, the majority of modern men are today's Sadducees who believe there is no resurrection. They'll believe in an afterlife of spirituality or reincarnation or simply ceasing to exist. But most modern men in western society are today's Sadducees, who assume the resurrection

is a farce, the sham of a fairytale in which their own superior wisdom can poke holes.

But Jesus not only disarms the Sadducees of their supposed “superior argument,” but even criticizes how ill-informed and shortsighted their opinion is. He says, “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed” ... as if Jesus says, “You wise ones! You who only believe Moses’ Torah are the true Old Testament books... have you studied Moses so poorly that you never noticed that Moses also spoke of the resurrection?”

Yes, the resurrection is that certain. A certain *benefit* for those who have lived as sons of this age with faith in the Son of God, that they may one day share not only in his title – ‘sons of God’ – but also share in his resurrection as “sons of the resurrection.” ... so that *what we will be* has not yet appeared, but when *He* appears (the second coming), we shall see Him as he is, for we shall be like him (the resurrection).

In this life of the world to come, the sons of the resurrection will no longer need any comforts of the old world – not even marriage – for they will live in the new and everlasting world that will forever benefit from the one marriage that never ends, that marriage of Christ and His Church. With all the angels of heaven, the Church will forever rejoice over the vows which Christ made with his blood on the cross, the vows into which He brought His bride in the water of Holy Baptism and, baptizing her into that vow of the

divine marriage, He guaranteed her a share in the resurrection: “If we have been *united with him* (marriage language) in a death like his, we shall certainly be *united with him* in a resurrection like his.”

Thus, in this text of what sounds like doctrinal jousting, take heart and rejoice in the plain truth that your God cares intimately for: (1) your temporal life, even giving the mysterious gift of the two becoming one flesh; and (2) your eternal life, even giving the profound mystery of the resurrection of your flesh. And such divine love is not an odd couplet of seemingly unrelated promises. But, in earthly marriage, he frustrates Death’s advance, while pointing each generation to that eternal marriage that will forever stop Death’s advance... will forever bring death to Death itself, and thereby give His bride the unparalleled wedding present of the resurrection and life everlasting.

In the Name of the Father  
And of the Son  
And of the Holy Spirit.  
+ AMEN +

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