

King of Glory Lutheran
Year C: Pentecost 22, Luke 20
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry
November 9, 2025
Imagine Eternity!

Luke 20:27-38

²⁷ Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to [Jesus] 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 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."

People of God, what would you do if you had no fear? Most fear brings death close. So, what would it be like to not have any threat of death? What would it be like to live without any threat of death in any of its forms.

When there is scarcity, scarcity brings deaths of all sorts. Lack of food. Lack of confidence. Lack of power. Lack of recognition. Fear? Our fears bring deaths on all sorts of levels to our productivity, our resilience, our inaction. The presence of suffering brings deaths: deaths of healthy cells, death of all that used to be, death of dreams. Those are only three powers that pull death close: scarcity, fear and suffering.

What does the threat of death look like in your life? Loss of relationship. Worry about retirement funds. The approaching cold of winter with higher heating bills.

Where is death encroaching on you?

Hold that thought while we learn a little more about the argument people are picking with Jesus.

Our text for this morning, comes near the end of the book of Luke. Jesus has already overturned the tables in the temple. He has mourned over the city of Jerusalem. The religious leaders are still looking for a way to catch him.

The Sadducees give Jesus such a ridiculous story they are trying to get him to say the resurrection doesn't exist.

To understand the Sadducees hypothetical story, here is a bit of context. Sadducees only studied the Pentateuch; the first five books of the Bible. Because there is no mention of an afterlife in these books, they did not believe in a resurrection. Their understanding of God was that God only operated in this life to protect and fulfill God's covenant promises. No afterlife. No resurrection. This is why they are sad-you-see.

Pharisees on the other hand read not only the Torah, but they also read the prophets and the Psalms. Within those books are enough references to a resurrection, they believed in resurrection for the just. God operates within justice and resurrection for Pharisees.

Apparently, Jesus believes in the resurrection as well. Because he doesn't dismiss this disease question entirely. Instead, he seems to indicate there is no way to understand the resurrection from the confines and structures of this life.

This is one text within our whole of scripture, that Jesus describes a bit of what the afterlife is like. Or rather what it's not like. He says there will be no need to marry because marriage is not a reality in the afterlife. All the traditions, structures, and rules that we use in this life to keep order will not be important in the next life.

There is a distinct difference, apparently between this life and the next life. The most important being that we cannot die anymore. The children of God cannot die anymore!

At a previous church, I served, I was greeting people after worship on All Saints Day. A gentleman shook my hand and said, "Congratulations."

“For what?”

“You are one year closer to your own death.”

What an odd thing to say! I wanted to respond, “And also with you.” But I held my tongue.

You and I know what that parishioner said is true. Every birthday brings us one year closer to that inevitable end. In fact, we make jokes about it. Still on the Green side of the grass! Not buying green bananas anymore.

But did we hear what Jesus said?! We cannot die anymore in the resurrection! We will be nearer to God than ever before. And where God is there is life! Life abundant. Life eternal. Life everlasting. Where God is there is life.

We have to imagine what we can't imagine! The resurrection needs new language, new ideas, the new that hasn't been created yet in this earthly realm. Our resurrected bodies. Will be able to travel outside the bounds of time and space as we know it. Perhaps groups of souls will be working together on a project assigned by God; one group here and another group there. Literally only God knows! And yet where there is God there is life! And Jesus in this text promises us a resurrection.

So what have we got to lose? If so many things about this life point towards death... And yet we believe Jesus words that there is a resurrection and that we will not be able to die anymore. Then how could that change the way we live?

What might God be calling you to do without any scarcity? Where is God calling you to leave behind your fear in this life, so that God might use you in a way God needs to. How could you reframe your suffering that it might transform your life into something glorious for God? We shall not die, but we shall live! What hope that brings!

Some of you remember a party phone line, yes? A woman, always a woman, yes? She sat and pulled out a plug to insert it in another socket to make the phone ring at your house. Everyone up and down the street could listen in on your conversation - a party line - if they picked up their receiver while you were on the phone.

For anyone who has only lived with this device (a cell phone), it's hard to imagine not having instant access and availability to make a phone call. It's hard to imagine

a huge black box literally fastened to a wall. It's almost unimaginable having to wait your turn to use the phone. Or the urgency to get to a physical phone to connect with someone in an emergency.

But once a person has gotten used to instant accessibility, the ability to call who you want when you want, to always have a phone with you, why would you want to go back to anything else?

It's like when I asked my grandmother to teach me how to make a cake from scratch. She looked at me and said, "why on earth would you want to do that?"

Once we catch a glimpse of another way, another world, a better place, then the burdens of the first way, the first world isn't motivating anymore!

Can we see it? Can we feel it? God has already prepared it! Jesus has promised it. So how can we live in response to the reality of resurrection now?

Care less about money and things?

Care more for humans?

Work to sustain God's creation?

God is asking us this week to throw caution to the wind and live as if we cannot die. And we shall not die! Thanks be to God. Amen!

Footnote: Ideas for this sermon from Rev. Kendra Mohn.

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-32-3/commentary-on-luke-2027-38-6>