



Lectionary 32, Year C

Bishop Timothy Graham, Indiana-Kentucky Synod
22nd Sunday After Pentecost: Gospel Text – Luke 20:27-38

Luke 18:9-14

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."

SERMON TEXT:

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

Humans respond to the idea of death in many interesting ways. Our age and level of maturity often influence how we perceive it. Children, especially, offer a joyful, unique perspective. They're naturally curious and tend to ask lots of questions—some that might be tricky for us to answer. And occasionally, they surprise us with their innocent understanding.

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?"

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead!"

Well, that young boy is right. Death precedes heavenly resurrection! Yet, by God's mystery and grace, we are already joined to Christ's own death and resurrection—in the sacrament of

Holy Baptism. In those precious waters, we have died with Christ and been raised to newness of life, marked with the cross forever and claimed as children of God. Each time we affirm our baptism—remembering it at the font—we taste resurrection’s promise here and now.

Today, we’re blessed to explore a wonderful collection of readings! Each text is filled with hope and carries the joyful promise that God is doing something beautiful and new—even when everything seems lost, even when we encounter death. We experience these wonderful promises not just in Scripture, but also in the sacraments, where God’s grace is truly and tangibly poured into our lives.

We are all familiar with the story of Job from our earliest reading. Despite incredible suffering, Job boldly proclaims: “I know that my Redeemer lives!” He’s not whispering; he’s proclaiming! Job’s declaration cuts through despair and reminds us that our hope rests in a living God who is constantly by our side.

The Psalmist leaps into God’s arms with full trust: “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings!” What a vibrant image of God’s relentless love and protection! Even when we feel small or attacked by the world, our God hides us, embraces us, and lifts us up—as surely as we are gathered, forgiven and nourished whenever Christ meets us at His holy table.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul energizes the community to stand strong and hold fast to God’s truth and love! He urges us to remember that we are the “first fruits for salvation,” sanctified,

treasured, and set apart by the Holy Spirit. Paul is practically shouting encouragement: Don't be fooled by fear or faltering voices—God's grace is yours and it's unshakable!

Then Jesus, in the Gospel, turns the snare of the Sadducees on its head. Picture the scene: the Sadducees, confident in their skepticism, approach Jesus with a complicated question, hoping to trap Him and challenge the hope that God freely gives to God's people. But Jesus gently reminds us that tricky legal details or human boundaries don't confine the promise of resurrection! Instead, Jesus lifts our spirits and invites us to look beyond the earthly realm to the beautiful horizon of God's abundant life.

When the Sadducees ask Jesus about whose wife a woman will be in the resurrection—after having been married to seven brothers—they seem to view eternal life as just an extension of everyday life, as if God's promises are limited by our earthly ideas. But oh, how Jesus opens our eyes! He explains, "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...they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection!"

Can you feel that sacramental promise? Each time we gather around the font or table, God's love isn't limited to the systems and rules we're familiar with! Resurrection isn't just an extension—it's a beautiful transformation. It's the emergence of a new creation! It's freedom! Everyone is a child of God, alive in ways we can't fully grasp. What God has planned for us is bigger, brighter, and more life-giving than anything we've known or could imagine!

Jesus doesn't try to prove the resurrection by arguing with the Sadducees; instead, he gently points them back to Moses and the burning bush. He lovingly reminds us (and them!) that God is a God of the living, not the dead. In God's eyes, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive, and so are we, right here and now! Each of us, beloved, is embraced by this wonderful God of life—His Spirit poured out in our baptism, His living presence nourishing us at His table.

As followers of Jesus in the Lutheran tradition, this wondrous promise touches every part of our lives. Resurrection isn't just a distant idea; it's a hopeful reality! Each time we taste forgiveness and hope in the bread and wine, as we remember our baptisms, we are enfolded in resurrection's power. We are not chained by this life or the brokenness of the world around us. In Christ, the grave isn't the final word. Our God breathes new life into us, calls us children of the resurrection, and assures us that to Him—ALL are alive! This hope encourages us to take chances on love, seek justice, share hope generously, stand side by side with those who are marginalized, and celebrate the Spirit's work within us and beyond!

Today is a wonderful day to rejoice—Let's give thanks. Stand firm in God's promises, encourage one another, and trust that in Christ, life, hope, and new beginnings are always ours. We are called to be people of hope and action: Facing suffering with courage, believing in resurrection with enthusiasm, and proclaiming God's boundless, unending grace to the world. We belong to the living God, who comforts, strengthens, and sends us out to share life and love with passion and tangible,

sacramental signs. Let's unite to celebrate a God who loves us so deeply that He claims us for life, not death—and who assures us that nothing can separate us from His love. Even when the next step isn't clear, trust that the same God who raised Jesus will raise us and all creation to new life. As you move forward, do so with hope in your heart, free to love, brave in standing for justice, and joyful as children of the resurrection—fed, washed, and sent by the grace of God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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