

Please pray with me. May the meditations of my heart and the words of my lips be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, and may you add a blessing to the hearing and understanding of this message today. Amen.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus is approached by some Sadducees. They hope to trick him and expose him as a fraud, as against the traditions and understanding of the Jewish community. They give him a hypothetical:

A woman is married to one of seven brothers.

Her husband dies and they have no kids.

In Mosaic tradition, she is given to the next youngest brother in marriage.

He also dies, without any children between them.

You know how this goes –

she outlives all the brothers, without any children.

Now, the leaders ask their question,

in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?

The Sadducees don't believe in the resurrection.

They think the rules and traditions around life, marriage, lineage, Old Testament laws of this world need to be applied in a life after death scenario/kingdom/realm.

And it can't be – there are just too many layers and complications.

Jesus says, "Your conception of God is too small.

In the resurrection people don't marry; they're not given in marriage.

No, he says, they are like angels, heavenly beings, beloved of God, and all of this here on earth, that doesn't apply."

I don't know about you, but that's a relief to me.

The things that we struggle with in this life won't matter in the next.

We don't just take our world's rules, policies and what not and God waves a magic wand and we now are equitable and just with our resources and value all human beings equally.

It's also a relief to me that we are not the first to

wrestle with what resurrection is.

For centuries, for generations, humans have been trying to comprehend this.

So, if you've ever had a day when you thought,

"Really, Jesus, resurrection? I can't, how, what??"

Well, take heart you are not alone.

And, Jesus understands.

As one member of the Trinity, he understands,

he experiences this resurrection, this living with God.

He doesn't get angry with the questioners,

Jesus asks us to think beyond our cherished understanding of

what is possible and impossible,

because nothing is impossible with God.

In today's gospel, and elsewhere in the gospels,

the privileged seem pretty sure of themselves,

often using or abusing the most vulnerable as they seek to discredit Jesus.

Remember the woman charged with adultery

the authorities brought before Jesus.

Remember the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears

the high-level officials berated.

Remember the woman he cured on the sabbath

over the objections of the elite.

In today's gospel, they chose a widow,

passed from one man to another,

possessed, owned with no personal agency.

It is to these that the kingdom of God is coming.

Jesus promises the vulnerable and suffering,

the despairing and desperate that the kingdom of God is coming

and they are blessed.

Jesus offers them hope.

From a place of privilege, it's hard to find Jesus'

teachings alluring.

Maybe resurrection doesn't make sense to the privileged

because they don't need their circumstances reversed, improved.

Maybe resurrection only makes sense to those who desperately need it. Those for whom hope, justice, peace, rest, and consolation after death resonates because their lives on earth are marred by injustice, anxiety, toil and trauma.

Imagine what it would mean for the woman in the gospel today, to arrive in the resurrection and find that she is welcomed and loved by God for who she is – herself a beloved child of God- her worth and her belovedness don't depend on her husband, her ability to have children or her sex appeal. Imagine her basking in the safe, unconditional, and eternal love of the God who created her.

Jesus is telling us that as children of the resurrection we are children of love. Full stop.

Neither our questions, nor our actions based on faith should not require us to harm or devalue anyone who is suffering in this life.

If they do, we are asking the wrong questions, taking the wrong actions.

The resurrection life is the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God where people are held as beloved of God our creator.

A kingdom where there is no marriage or given in marriage.

A time and place where no one or their life is controlled by another.

Women are not controlled by men.

Love is love.

There are no borders.

Patriarchy, white supremacy, and borders are obsolete, defunct, dead.

We pray for this kingdom every day when we pray,

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

This means then, that we are called to ministries that support equality for women and people of color,

ministries that stand with the LGBTQ+ communities,

ministries that surround and support the most vulnerable and overlooked.

This is the kingdom we pray for,

the kingdom we work for,
as long as we are sure we want this kingdom.

In this kingdom all of us flourish,
everyone receives abundant life.
Because God is a God of the living not the dead.
A foundational belief as Christians is the resurrection of the dead.
Yes, there is mystery about what this will be.
Yes, we must forgo the science and our best efforts and explanations of life.
The good news is that we get to leave our noble,
yet flawed efforts behind one day.

But, do not be deceived, siblings in Christ,
as Paul says in his letter to the Thessalonians,
the day of the Lord is not yet here if
the privileged direct, engage and rejoice in the suffering of others.
The day of the Lord is not yet here when the elite seek
control over others, seek to hoard resources and wealth,
seek to preference one gender over another,
one race, one anything over another.

As Paul says that is not the eternal consolation that God
has given us out of mercy,
or what Jesus describes in his response to the Sadducees in today's gospel.

Having been fed by God's word,
Let us celebrate the meal that is the promise of that eternal life.
May we rejoice in hope in the resurrection,
eternal life with God that Jesus promises us.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.