

Resurrection

November 10, 2019

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Luke 20:

[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, 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."

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A very zealous soul-winning young preacher recently came upon a farmer working in his field. Being concerned about the farmer's soul the preacher asked the man, "Are you laboring in the vineyard of the Lord my good man?" Not even looking at the preacher and continuing his work the farmer replied, "Naw, these are soybeans." "You don't understand," said the preacher. "Are you a Christian?" With the same amount of interest as his previous answer the farmer said, "Nope my name is Jones. You must be lookin' for Jim Christian. He lives a mile south of here."

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The young determined preacher tried again asking the farmer, "Are you lost?" "Naw! I've lived here all my life," answered the farmer. "Are you prepared for the resurrection?" the frustrated preacher asked. This caught the farmer's attention and he asked, "When's it gonna be?"

Thinking he had accomplished something the young preacher replied, "It could be today, tomorrow, or the next day." Taking a handkerchief from his back pocket and wiping his brow, the farmer remarked, "Well, don't mention it to my wife. She don't get out much and she'll wanna go all three days."

Resurrection? Our profound grief over the loss of such a dear friend and Christian servant. Our need for hope and strength and comfort as many of us who remain suffer illness and human limitation. Our need for healing of body, soul and mind. Like the farmer's wife, we are so often caught up in this mortality of ours so often that we don't get out much ourselves. And as to a Resurrection that could be today, tomorrow or the next day, mention it and we will want to go all three days too!

As Christians we believe in the Resurrection. That God raised Jesus from the dead. That Jesus lives. That we and all who will have ever lived will one day be raised from the dead. That those who believe and are baptized will live with God forever.

As was true at the time of Jesus, so today also, not everyone believes this. At the time of Jesus, the religious group within Judaism that denied there was such a thing as resurrection were the Sadducees. They were rather sneaky characters. During Jesus' last week on earth before his death and resurrection, the Sadducees came to him in the Temple in Jerusalem and tried to trick him by presenting to him a hypothetical situation. A man died leaving his wife without any children. According to the rule of Levirate marriage, the man's next oldest brother had to marry her and attempt to produce a child. This happened a total of seven times, each time producing no child. Then the woman died. In the Resurrection, the Sadducees said, whose wife would the woman be?

Barbara Brown Taylor tells the story of a woman who was dying of cancer when her husband suddenly dropped dead of a heart attack. At his funeral someone came up to her and tried to console her by reminding her it would not be long until she and her husband were together again. Later, when she was alone with her pastor, she looked at her pastor with tears streaming down her face and exclaimed, "I am never going to get away from him, am I?"²

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Barbara Brown Taylor, *Home by Another Way*, "God of the Living", p. 204.

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Marriage here on earth or hereafter in heaven is not the subject. The subject is Resurrection. Being raised from the dead never to die again. To live with God forever.

Yet, is it a subject we are ready for?

One of my teachers and mentors and a beloved saint of God, Dr. Carlyle Marney, once encountered a student at Duke University who came up to him and said, "Dr. Marney, would you say a word or two about the resurrection of the dead?" Marney replied, "I will not discuss that with people like you." "Why not?" asked the student. "I don't discuss such matters with anyone under 30," Marney said. "Look at you, in the prime of life, potent - never have you known honest-to-God failure, heart-burn, impotency, solid defeat, brick walls, mortality. So what can you know of a dark world which only makes sense if Christ is raised?"³

Maybe, just maybe we have lived long enough, known failure enough and experienced enough of all the other characteristics of a dark world that the only thing that makes any sense of it all is if Christ is raised!

Say it with me! "I believe in the Resurrection of The Body and The Life Everlasting." Say it with me! "Christ is Risen!" "And because He lives, I too will live!"

We are destined to be, Jesus himself said, Children of The Resurrection. Like angels. Never to die anymore.

If such is our destiny, and it is, then such can be our present identity! We are the heirs of Eternal Life! That is our comfort, our assurance and our strength at times such as these. It is the Good News! No, the Greatest News that has ever been spoken or heard!

I mention it to you because I know you also will want to go all three days!

Resurrection and Eternal Life. Today, tomorrow and the next day.

Amen.

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