

Luke 20: 27-38

**Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection,
came to him 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 the children for his brother.**

**Now there were seven brothers:
the first married, and died childless;
then the second and the third married her,
and so in the same way all seven died childless.**

Finally the woman also died.

In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be?

For the seven had married her.

Jesus said to them,

**‘Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;
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.**

**Indeed they cannot die any more,
because they are like angels and are children of God,
being children of the resurrection.**

**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.

**Now he is God not of the dead,
but of the living;
for to him all of them are alive.**

Meditation

**Oh ...how we all want answers!
We human beings have such a hard time with uncertainty,
with not knowing...
with mystery,**

**Just look at the angst of so many cubs fans just 8 days ago, when they were
down in the world series 3 games to one...
will they finally do it? will they lose again?**

**Or feel the angst of people everywhere wondering who will be elected this coming
Tuesday....and what will happen afterwards...**

**or on a personal level...
remember the worry and anxiety waiting for your college acceptance letters,
or a biopsy report or perhaps the results of your latest job interview...**

**I remember saying quite often when my children were little:
if I only knew that in the end, they would be responsible, happy adults...
THEN my worry would be so much less...**

**and of course, the most universal mystery,
the biggest unknown for all human beings**

is what happens when we die...

is there any life after death?

if so...what will be like?

gold streets?

angels with harps?

the fires of hell?

somewhere in between?

are we re-born as another creature, depending on how we good...or not...

we have been in this life?

Are we sent to a particular place depending upon how well—or not—

we have followed our particular religion's or rules and dogmas...

or do we simply decompose and return back to the earth and that is the end of our story?

Philosophers call this issue of what happens after we die our existential angst...

and it affects all of us....

and it has bothered humanity ever since we became aware of our mortality.

This was one point of contention between the Sadducees and the Pharisees in Jesus' time.

The Sadducees didn't believe that life continued...

and the Pharisees did...

and so the Sadducees set up the crazy 'what if' scenario...

well...if a widow remarries (which she would have to do by Jewish Law)

whose wife will she be in the after life?

Of course, this presumes that what ever happens next

will be simply a repeat of what it is like now...

but Jesus, in his usual way, doesn't give a simple yes or no answer...

he assures them life continues,

that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive..

but he does not say how or where or in what manner of living...
So...it can be very reassuring to know life continues,
but it also leaves us with a lot of questions...
his answer only brings us so far and then leads to a greater mystery...
So how do we live with and in that mystery??
I think it depends upon how we understand mystery
If mystery only temporary not knowing
Then science will eventually answer all of our questions,
and then we won't need religion anymore to make us less anxious about living and dying...

If mystery is forever not knowing then using religion for answers helps some to feel
secure: if I'm good enough to please God,
God will let me live in heaven after I die...answer 'a'..
and if I'm not good enough, I will live in eternal torment...answer 'b'...
not a pleasant answer, but an answer none the less..
Personally that use of religion, only increases our anxiety because we never know if we are
'good enough' to make it to heaven..
so we live, consciously or not,
in the eternal fear that we got it wrong...

Jesus offers a third way of being with the mystery of what next...
First of all, he certainly had no awareness of science as we know it today...
so this wasn't an option in his day...
and secondly: he absolutely did not believe in the judgmental God ...
Jesus gave his life because he understood the essential goodness of God...
he knew that the Lord of the Universe...his Abba, Daddy God
was ultimately Love, boundless and unconditional...
and he knew that in and through all of the fragility and vulnerability of life
there was a Power and a Presence that held us through it all and
he knew we were ultimately safe and loved...

**What he asked of the people of his day...
and what he is asking of us this day...
is to trust, which is to have Faith, in this Mysterious, Holy, and Divine Love...
he invited us to:
#1: to allow this trust, our faith, to relieve our fear both in this life
and about the next one...
and #2: to let this love flow through our lives for the good of all creation...**

Sounds magnificent, eh?

We all know, though, that it is often so much easier said than done...

**The invitation of the spiritual life
is to learn how to become comfortable with the mystery of Divine Love...**

Life has always frightened us...

We human beings have always felt small and powerless in the presence of nature...

Tornadoes, drought, floods...climate change...whatever...

we have always felt at the mercy of "life"...

so we concocted loads of teachings and rituals trying to give ourselves a feeling of control...

but ultimately we know that we are not in control...

and we don't feel comfortable, we don't feel safe...when we are not in control...

**What Jesus tried to teach us is that: yes, we are not in control, but we do not have to be
afraid of the one who is...because the one is, is Love.**

Jesus rejected the notion that we could control life or God...

**he rejected the beliefs that if we were good enough then God would reward us with
heaven...because those beliefs put us back in control...**

Jesus simply taught that God loves us. period. No matter what.

We are invited to accept it, to open our hearts, minds and lives to this unconditional Love....

and we are asked to share it...

Jesus simply taught the unconditional Love of God and invited us trust it... that is our faith...

Trusting in God's eternal unconditional love dispels fear and relieves us trying to figure out what is not figureoutable... our worry and anxieties and 'existential angst' is diminished

Does that mean that we won't experience pain or suffering in this life?

No... that is the nature of life.

but it does mean that pain and suffering and death do not hold the ultimate upper hand....

Love does....

Does that mean we can sit back and just coast through life?

No...when we experience Divine love and the security of being held in Holy love we find ourselves wanting to share this knowing, share this feeling... some folks will be open to it, some will not....

but we won't worry about that either:

because they too are held by this Amazing Mysterious love...

So...sometimes we get the answers we hope for:

Yes...the cubbies won World Series!

and sometimes we don't...

sometimes we have to wait longer for answers than we would like to ...

such as what results of the election might mean for our nation

and sometimes we never get an answer to certain questions...

Yes... this life is uncertain and limited and fragile and full of mystery...

**But there is one truth we can trust, if we are willing:
the God of Jesus the Christ...
the God in whom we live and move and have our being...
is a God of the living,
a God of unconditional Love...
and there is no reason, for any of us, to be afraid of what happens next....
and for that we can only say:
Thank you...amen.**