

✠ Luke 20:27-40 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

As in the days of Noah when men married and were given in marriage until Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all, so the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage until the Day of the Lord when He will kill the man of lawlessness with the breath of His mouth, His Holy Spirit. When He will send fire to consume the heavens and the earth and the wicked will be destroyed, sent into everlasting torment and suffering, and the righteous in Christ will be gathered to Him as chicks are gathered under the wing of their mother. Then the marriage of man and woman will cease for it is but a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Marriage is a picture, a shadow of the greater reality that you are the Bride of Christ. You are betrothed to the Lamb of God. He has been promised you by His Father, and He will come again in glory to unite Himself to you, making you bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, just as He makes Himself one with you, giving you His flesh to eat and blood to drink for the forgiveness of sins.

On that day the Lord will take those considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection to His Father's house where there are many mansions, where He has prepared a place for you, and will feast with you and make merry with you.

"Teacher, who is considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection?" We like the sound of heaven and the idea of finally seeing with our eyes what we now only see with the eyes of faith, but we quickly sink back into justifying ourselves. "Who is my neighbor?" "What is the bare minimum I must do to inherit eternal life?" "Who is considered worthy?"

Repent, for the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. The sons of this age worry about the things of this age. But those who are worthy, those washed by the blood of the Lamb, look forward to the heavenly home where they neither marry or are given in marriage because they are the Bride of the Bridegroom, married to the Lamb. The sons of God, the sons of the resurrection neither worry of the things of this life nor put faith in their own works. The sons of the resurrection look the Resurrected One. They concern themselves with persevering, being worthy because He is worthy.

The heart of the issue for the Sadducees that asked Jesus about marriage at the resurrection was not marriage. They were not really concerned about whose wife the seven-fold widow would be. They denied the resurrection. They denied the Word of God. They were guilty of unbelief and sedition. They preached false doctrine and followed made-made philosophies. They were deceived and so they deceived others.

They were bent on making a case for their theological opinion, even using Moses to try and silence any talk of the resurrection of the dead. But the perspicuity of Scripture, the clearness of the Word of God, would not be muddied by their attempts to twist God's Word to suite their own preconceived notions and ideas about what should or should not be, about what could or could not be.

Their argumentation, no matter how sincere they may have been, no matter how much they wanted to be right, was wrong – dead wrong. But the Word of Truth never lets falsity stand.

Jesus cuts through their deception. He tells them that they have the wrong end in view; they misread Moses. Moses pointed to a better time, a more glorious life than the one now lived. For this life ends in death, but Moses wrote and spoke of the God of the living, the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. He spoke and wrote of Jesus. Moses spoke of the resurrection and life after death, life in the presence of God, life in the presence of Jesus.

It is no wonder that the Sadducees did not dare to ask Jesus anything further. What is a wonder is why they did not then believe. For we read of the Sadducees later in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, arguing and fighting with Paul as he preaches the resurrection of the dead.

Here they have the clear Word of God, that God is the God of the living, as He says all throughout the Scripture, yet they don't get it. Seeing they do not perceive and hearing they do not understand. They continue to deny the resurrection. They continue to deny the Word of God.

But just as marriage was not the heart of the issue, neither was their denial of the resurrection the heart of their unbelief. That was just a symptom. False doctrine, wrong living, rebellion, betrayal – they're all symptoms of the real problem. The real problem of the Sadducees, the real problem of Nicodemus, asking how a man can enter a second time into his mother's womb, the real problem of Adam and Eve wanting to decide for themselves what was good and evil is that they did not come to God as little children, but rather as rational, decision-making adults, able to tell God what His Word says. The problem with everyone who wants to assert their own theology, their own world-view, even their own morality, is that they want to be like God: deciding what is good and evil.

The kingdom of God makes no sense to fallen man, and so we reason by our own understanding to try and make the Word of God fit our perceptions of reality.

The Sadducees did not come asking for the wisdom and understanding of God. They came asking to support their own theology, rather than asking to hear the truth. And when the truth was revealed, when the truth was spoken by the Word made flesh, they did not believe. They did not submit to the truth. They did not bend the knee and proclaim their allegiance to the Holy One of God, but neither did they open their mouths anymore. When the Truth speaks, the mouths of liars are silenced.

And it was good that they did not open their mouths. For then they did not have the opportunity to make excuses themselves. When the lie is exposed and the liar makes no excuse, it is the first step towards repentance. An excuse perpetuates the lie and blocks the heart from repenting. Make no excuse for your sins, for your rebellion. Repent.

And what excuse could they have made for their unbelief? The excuse they had tried to use, Moses and the law, had been removed. Right understanding was made clear. They had leaned on their own understanding, leaned on what they wanted to be true, and when that was taken from them, there was nothing left to lean on: they fell.

Such is the fate of all who lean on their own understanding. When you lean on your own understanding, you are saying to God, “I do not need your wisdom. I do not need your counsel.” You are in fact telling God that you will tell Him how things are to go and what things are important and what things are not important, what things are necessary and what things are not. You create a god in your own image and likeness.

When you lean on your own understanding, you do not come to God as a little child. You come to Him as an equal, as one who can decide what is right and wrong, good and evil. Yet God is God alone, there are none beside Him.

The Word of God is clear. It is unambiguous. It does not let shadows remain. It casts its piercing, blinding light into all corners of our hearts and minds. So blinding, in fact, that either we continue to grope around as blind men, claiming we can make it on our own, or we let God lead us by the hand into all truth and wisdom, seeing with the eyes of faith that God is in control and will lead us through the valley of the shadow of death and into the land of the living.

But just as it was good that the Sadducees remained silent, not making excuses for their unbelief, it was also bad that they remained silent. It was good because the Truth had silenced their lies and made room for true understanding, but it was bad because in their silence they did not repent. They did not seek to be right with God. When their own theology and notions of God and His kingdom was cut open and laid bare, they retreated into silence. They did not speak words of repentance, seeking forgiveness for their sin of unbelief. This silence is damning. They should have spoken like the blind man, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us.” They should have spoken like Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

But another group did speak up. The scribes who were there among the Sadducees spoke up, congratulating Jesus on His wisdom, “Well spoken, teacher.” They were on His side. They loved to hear the Sadducees silenced. But they were not right either.

Jesus warns His disciples in the hearing of all, “Beware of the scribes. They like to walk around in long robes, looking official, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts. Yet they devour widows’ houses and for a pretense of holiness they make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

They are the hypocrites. The Sadducees are not hypocrites, at least not here. They say what they mean and mean what they say. It’s just wrong. And when they are corrected and brought into the truth, they do not repent and so are under judgment.

But the scribes receive the greater condemnation. They neither say yea or nay to the resurrection or to anything else. They attach themselves to whatever seems to be right for the moment, whatever is drawing the bigger crowd or the most money and praise. They love to be on the side that appears to be winning, no matter what that side is preaching or teaching.

They look for ways to make themselves look and sound good and right, all the while not caring if what they say or do is true or good. They are justified in themselves that their way is the winning way, the more appealing way. They puff themselves up by their show of piety and good works, while on the inside they care only that they are not made a fool of. They are hypocrites, and there is no room in the kingdom of heaven for hypocrites.

For the Sadducees, though they did not repent, there is at least opportunity to repent. They are silenced by the truth and the silence is opportunity for reflection and repentance. Consider your ways and turn to the Lord, for with the Lord there is always forgiveness.

But the hypocrite has no opportunity to repent. The hypocrite is the worst of all sinners, receiving the greater condemnation because the only truth they acknowledge is the truth that makes them popular and looked up to. They seek their own glory. They receive the greater condemnation because those who follow a lie can be taught, but hypocrites cannot be taught because they seek only the praise of men.

To the hypocrite, then, there is this warning: repent, for on the day of the resurrection, the Day of the Lord, no man will be watching you, giving you honor for your achievements and life. You will have received your reward in full. All eyes will be fixed on the Lamb who was slain, giving Him all glory and honor. All will be on bended knee professing the truth: Jesus is Lord. And you, o hypocrite, will receive no glory from on high because you do not seek the glory of God now.

To the Sadducee, the one who follows and even teaches a lie, there is this warning: repent, today if you hear His voice do not harden your heart (Hebrews 3:17). Seek the Lord now while He may be found, while it is still today and the truth may be sought. For when the night falls no one will seek repentance but all will be as they are: sons of darkness and lies, or sons of the light and truth.

God is the God of the living. He is the God of truth. In Him is no darkness. He who comes from above is above all. He bears witness to what He has seen and heard. Receive His testimony for God is true. The resurrection of the dead will come to pass even as Christ is raised from the dead. All will be raised, those who have shunned evil and called upon the name of the Lord to the resurrection of life, and those who have embraced falsehood and lies to the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29).

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠