

The Resurrection is Real

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into Luke chapter 20, focusing on the encounter between Jesus and the Sadducees regarding the resurrection. Jesus challenges their materialistic and worldly perspective by explaining the nature of the afterlife, emphasizing that in heaven, there is no need for marriage or procreation as life is eternal and different from earthly existence. He also highlights the importance of focusing on Jesus in eternity rather than earthly relationships or possessions. The sermon concludes with reflections on the hope of resurrection through Jesus and the assurance of eternal life.

Scripture: Luke 20:27, John 11:25, Romans 6:22, Revelation 7:15

Topics: "Resurrection", "Eternal Life"

Description

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Transcript

We continue then in Luke chapter 20, and this morning we're in verse 27 through 40. Luke chapter 20, 27 through 40. This is what is commonly called Passion Week, the last week of Jesus' ministry on earth before the crucifixion.

He is being examined by all and sundry. Everyone is trying to trip him up, trying to find a basis or a reason to have him handed over to the governor and to have him crucified. So let's read from Luke chapter 20 from verse 27.

Then some of the Sadducees who denied that there is a resurrection came to him and asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died without children, and the second took her wife, her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also, and they left no children and died.

Last of all, the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife. Jesus answered and said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.

Then some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, you have spoken well, but after that they did not question him anymore. So this is the turn of the Sadducees, and if you remember from the beginning of chapter 20 in verse 1 of chapter 20, it says the chief priests and the scribes and the elders try to trip Jesus up. Then in verse 20 of chapter 20, the Pharisees and the Herodians try to get him, and now finally it's the Sadducees.

So everybody in the political and theological spectrum from the extreme left to the extreme right had all had their go with Jesus, and obviously they had all come short. But now finally the Sadducees think, well, maybe, you know, maybe we'll be able to do what the Pharisees and the scribes and the Herodians and everybody else wasn't able to do. And so they questioned him concerning the resurrection.

So some of the Sadducees who denied that there is a resurrection came to him and asked him. So the Sadducees were one of the main parties. There were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but there were also two other parties which are not part of the discussion this morning.

These guys had a whole bunch of strange things that they believed. They didn't believe in the rest of the Old Testament except the five books of Moses, and that was part of the reason why they didn't believe in the resurrection, because according to them the resurrection wasn't taught in the first five books of Moses. And so the resurrection is clearly taught in the rest of the Old Testament, and it is clearly taught in the New Testament.

In fact, it is taught in the Old Testament as Jesus pointed out to them. And so their wrong understanding was based on their wrong understanding of the scriptures to begin with. Together with that, they denied that there were spirits, that there was a spiritual world.

So they were completely and totally materialistic. Everything that you could handle and see and touch, everything in this world was real to them. Anything in the world beyond just didn't exist as far as they were concerned.

So because of this, their lifestyle was very, very carnal and worldly. Because there is no afterlife, there is no judgment, and so it doesn't matter. You can live any way you like because there is nothing after death.

You die and you go to the grave, and that's the end as far as they were concerned. They were also politically highly compromised because they had become the managers of the temple. And so the priests primarily came from the Sadducees.

The high priests only came from the Sadducees. So they ran the temple, and there's historic reasons. They traced their ancestry back to a priest called Zadok, and we're not even sure which Zadok that is.

There were a number of Zadoks in the Old Testament, and so the name Sadducee comes from Zadok in the Hebrew. It doesn't make sense in English, but it does in Hebrew. And so they believed that they were the legitimate descendants of Abraham, of Aaron, and of the Levites, which we spoke about on Thursday in the book of Hebrews.

And so because of that, they had the right to run the temple. To run the temple, they had to get into some political and financial deal with the Romans. And so they were in cahoots with the Roman government.

And the Roman government looked to them to keep peace and order in the temple, and therefore also amongst the people. In exchange, they got paid handsomely. And we'll see as we get to the judgment of the Lord Jesus just before his crucifixion, that the high priest lived in a palace.

So they were very, very wealthy. They were incredibly influential, not just in Roman circles, but also in Jewish circles. But as far as theology was concerned, they were totally—well, morally they were bankrupt.

Politically they were bankrupt, and theologically they were bankrupt. So they were really a bad lot. They would be what we would call the liberals today.

They would be on the extreme right of the political spectrum, the Pharisees being on the left—sorry, Sadducees on the right—on the left. Sadducees on the left, Pharisees on the right. All right.

So they're now going to try and trip him up on the resurrection. And so what they have is a stock question. A question which they—because the argument about the resurrection would come up all the time between them and the Pharisees.

And you remember that later on when Paul is being judged by them, by the Sanhedrin, Paul throws a stone in the bush, and he says, well, I'm here because I believe in the resurrection. And obviously immediately these two sides go for each other, and Paul somehow gets pushed to one side for a So you can see how hot of a topic it was, and Paul understood that, and he used that to get a bit of a diversion for a brief moment. So because it was an argument they used a lot, or that they had a lot, this was one of the arguments they used, which obviously has the purpose of trying to make the resurrection look ridiculous.

And so the story is that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. This was part of the law. The purpose of this, where God had instituted this, for two primary reasons.

They're related. The first reason is so that the family name would never die, so that that family would continue forever. And so if a man dies without children, particularly without male heirs, then his brother was to marry the wife, and she was to have children, and so the family name would continue.

In fact, in our family, the name does not continue because we only have daughters, and so the name stops with us. So the second reason was to maintain ownership of the property. Now remember, when Israel moved into the land, God divides the land amongst the twelve tribes, or the eleven tribes.

The Levites don't get any of the land, they get the cities of refuge. And so each tribe has its tribal territory, its area that God had designated to them. That was never to be estranged, was never to be moved from one tribe to the other.

But not just was the land never to be moved from one tribe to the other, it was also to remain within the families. This was a form, in fact, interestingly enough, against materialism, against land barons buying up land and dispossessing the poor. And so the families needed to always have their land, and you remember the book of Ruth revolves around this whole concept.

And so the purpose then was to continue the name and to continue the possession of that particular piece of land that had been given to that particular family. And so obviously you know how the argument then goes. And of course, if you look at it from a Sadducee perspective, and I'm going to explain that in a few moments, it seems to make, it seems to be a good argument.

Because this woman now was legitimately married to seven husbands. So now she gets to heaven, so who's the husband? So the next verses then deal with that. Verse 29 tells the story, now there were seven brothers, the first took a wife, died without children, the second took her as wife, and he died childless, the third took her, and in like manner the seven also, so it goes right through the seven, and they left no children and died.

Last of all, the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife. Now remember that they had clearly thought about this very carefully, because the other two groups had come to Jesus with very clever trick questions.

And they thought, well Jesus wasn't going to get out of these questions. And clearly he was. He was, his intellect and his understanding of things was far superior to theirs, and so he just dismisses their stupid arguments with very good, wise, clever, godly answers.

So they thought, well this time he's not going to have an answer. But Jesus has two answers. And Jesus answered and said to them, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

So notice the words, this age. But those who are counted worthy to attain to that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. So Jesus is saying, first of all, your understanding is wrong, because you are materialistic.

Because you're looking at stuff from a worldly point of view. Because all you can see is this world. You'd have no clue of the world that is to come.

And therefore he says, what happens in this world, and what happens in the age to come, are two different things. That the way we will be in heaven, if you will, the way we will be in eternity, is very different to the way we will be now. That was where the first problem comes.

You see, the problem is, the moment we have a worldly or materialistic or earthly view of things, it distorts our whole theology. It distorts everything that we understand and see. Because everything is based on this world.

And we can't see things from an eternal perspective. God doesn't see things from a worldly perspective. Obviously he understands what's going on here, but that's not God's point of view.

God's point of view is an eternal perspective. And so, for example, the prosperity doctrine, that God wants you to be rich and happy and prosperous in this world, is the same kind of thinking. It's only concerned about here and now.

The grab for power in a nationalistic sense from the churches today is the same kind of thing. It's just concerned with here and now. But God is not concerned with here and now.

He's concerned with eternity. And that's what matters. That is what is important.

We want to be happy for 70 years, 80 years, whatever we have on this earth. That's as far as we can see. No, God wants us to be happy for eternity.

And eternity is a totally different thing to now. The way we will be in eternity is different to now. Paul deals with this in a lot of detail in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

And he says that we don't fully understand what we're going to be like there. He says, but one of the things we do know is that we will be different. And then he says there's a kind of life for those things that walk on the earth, animals and people, and birds and fish.

They all have life. There is some similarities. The poor evolutionists don't understand that while there are similarities, there are massive differences between fish and birds and creeping things.

And so can you look at a man and figure out a fish? Clearly not. You may be able to look at a man and try and figure out a baboon, but you can't figure out a fish and you cannot figure out an eagle by looking at a man, because they are just different. They live in different environments.

Fish live in the water. Men, animals live on the earth. Birds live in the air.

And Paul uses that to illustrate the difference between the life we have now and the life we will have in eternity. Yes, there may be similarities, but there are massive differences. And you cannot look at this life and film a picture of what heaven is going to be like.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him. We cannot begin to imagine what heaven is going to be like, but what we do know is that it's going to be different. And it's not going to be different just in the sense of being different.

And it's not going to be different just in the sense of being worse. It's going to be different in that it's going to be multiple degrees better than anything that we can begin to imagine in this world. And of course, these sad guys—and I'm sure you know the stupid joke, you know, they were sad, you see, because they didn't believe in the resurrection.

They were miserable because all they could see is money and power and temporary stuff. They couldn't see the glories of heaven. And therefore, they couldn't understand that, in fact, in heaven, we don't marry.

And so Jesus goes on and he deals with that. He says, those who are counted worthy—notice that, who are counted worthy. So he's saying not everybody's going to get there.

How do we get counted worthy? Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, because we believe in him. We'll look at a couple of scriptures on that in a moment. So those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage.

So marriage is not an issue in heaven, because it's part of this life. We won't need to be married. One of the main reasons we need to get married—there's several reasons—but one of the main reasons we need

to get married is so that we can perpetuate the race.

So we can have children and continue to have the human race propagated. Now, if we don't die—and Jesus is going to address that—if we don't die, the need to continually propagate the race, to procreate, is no longer there. Because, however thousands, millions get into heaven, they will be there forever.

They're not going to be dying off, so there's no need for new ones to come. You see the same idea in the book of Hebrews. We just touched on this on Thursday, that the high priests in the Old Testament had to be replaced all the time because they died.

But Jesus is an eternal high priest. He never dies, so there's no need for a successor. There's no need for someone to take his place, and so the need for marriage is no longer there.

Nor can they die anymore, so they don't marry and they don't die, for they are equal to the angels. The word equal here does not mean equal in status, because I believe that Jesus says that we will rule angels. So in status we will be higher than the angels.

Equal here is we will be the same in the sense of the kind of life they have. And so we will be equal, we will be like the angels, and are sons of God being sons of the resurrection. So the angels don't marry.

Are the angels male or female? They are neither. You see, because those are things that have to do with this world. It has nothing to do with the world to come.

We're neither male nor female. We're not of this ethnicity or that tribe. We're all different.

And so they can't die. They are like the angels, because we are the sons of God. Of course now we are the sons in God by faith.

Spiritually we are the sons of God. We are being sons of the resurrection. And so the first answer Jesus then gives them is, you don't have a clue what you're talking about, because heaven is not like here.

This incidentally also addresses the issue of celestial marriages, of Mormonism, who believe that if you married in the temple, it's a celestial marriage, and that marriage will last through eternity. And Jesus says there's no such thing as marriage in heaven. We say, well, won't we recognize? I think we will recognize one another.

I think that we will have some kind of relationship with those that we knew here on earth. I believe we will see those and recognize those that were our loved ones. But, folk, the point is that heaven is not going to be about us.

It's going to be about the Lord Jesus. He's going to be the focus. And yes, I know there's great comfort for those of us who have lost loved ones and who have gone on to know that we're going to see them in heaven.

But, folk, there's something far more important than seeing our loved ones, and that is seeing Jesus. There's going to be something far more important than having a relationship with my wife in heaven, and that's having a real physical eye-to-eye relationship with Jesus Christ. He will outshine everything.

But also, our other relationships will be perfected. We know that every relationship in this world, whether it's a marriage or whether it's a friendship, is flawed, because we are flawed. And so, our relationships are

limited.

Our relationships have a limited distance that we can go, because there's a point at which we diverge. And we can't go there in our discussion, in our talking with one another, because we have different views. When we get there, we will all have the same heart, the same mind.

Our fellowship will, in fact, be deeper within the context of loved ones and in the context of family. But that will pale into insignificance in comparison to our relationship with the Lord Jesus. That will be what it's really all about.

But you can see this earthly mindset of the Sadducees present in many Christians today, who think of heaven in terms of streets of gold, and how big is my mansion going to be, and how big will my crown be, and how much will I be honored for the work that I've done for the Lord. Folks, that's a Sadducee mindset. It's seeing things from an earthly, worldly, carnal perspective.

No, heaven is about Jesus. He is the focus. He is the center.

He is what it's all about. And we say, well, that's not very fulfilling. No, it will be very fulfilling.

It will be glorious when we see him face to face. All right, now Jesus gives the second answer, and he addresses their question from the book of Exodus, the second book of the five that they hold to be authoritative. So even Moses showed in the burning bush passage— remember when God called Moses in the desert, in the burning bush, that the dead are raised— when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Here's the passage in Exodus 3, verse 6. The voice comes out of the burning bush, and he said, God said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. How does that prove the resurrection? Well, it's simple.

If I say, this man was a friend of your father. This man was a friend of your father. What does it mean? Your father is no longer alive, or the relationship has broken.

But when I say, this man is a friend of your father, what am I saying? The father is alive. You cannot have a relationship with someone who is dead. And that's what God says to Moses.

He says, I am, not I was, the God of Abraham. If Abraham was dead and there was no resurrection, then God would say, I was the God of Abraham. I was your ancestor's God, but I want to be your God.

No, he says, I am their God. And so God himself declares that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive in the resurrection, that they're in heaven. And so you say, well, is that a strong enough argument? It was for them because it says they had no response.

This was the end of the argument. And so clearly what Jesus is saying is the resurrection is proven in the Old Testament. So verse 38, for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.

We would say all live in him. Yes, all live in him. In him we live and move and have our being, Paul said.

But not only do we live in him, we live to him. We live in our relationship to him. We do not live eternally on our own, but we have eternal life in our relationship to him, our relationship with him.

So he is not the God of the dead, understanding that there are those who are spiritually dead, and in a sense God is not their God. And we understand that those who are spiritually dead and have died will be raised. The book of Revelation is clear that there are two resurrections, the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life, the resurrection of the unjust to eternal damnation.

So even those who die without Christ still have eternal life, but it's not eternal life in heaven, it's eternal life in perdition, in hell. So he is not the God of the dead. And I think that what Jesus is saying to them is, the God you serve is the God of the dead, because you say all your ancestors just die.

So your God is a dead God of dead people. And Jesus is saying, no, our God is a living God, a life-giving God. Remember that the New Testament draws that distinction, that Adam was a living soul, but Jesus is a life-giving spirit.

We have life, he gives life, and he is the God of the living. Verse 39, then some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, you have spoken well. Well, again, are they trying to flatter him, are they just trying to save their face, as it were? Because clearly those who were standing around saw that this was a gotcha moment.

Jesus got them. And so what can they say? You've spoken well. After that, they dared not question him anymore.

And so this is the final of the three in Luke and in the Gospels, and the other Gospels, there's a fourth point of confrontation with Jesus and Jesus. Now the rest of Luke, he's going to speak on his own basis, not on the basis of answering their questions. I want to just briefly remind you, then, of the New Testament as we draw to a close, and also as we prepare to speak on Henry's life as he has gone to be with the Lord.

Jesus said to her, this is to Mary, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. He shall live.

This is his promise. Remember that we have something that the Sadducees and that the Old Testament saints did not have, and that is the resurrection of Jesus. They had to believe on the promises of the Old Testament, and we don't have the time, so I didn't go through the other scriptures in the Old Testament that prove the resurrection.

But Job says that in my flesh, I will see the Lord. David also speaks about the fact that he will see the Lord, and so they had the hope of eternal life. But that was based simply on the promises of scripture.

Our hope is based not just on the promises of scripture, but on the proof of Jesus' resurrection. And so because he was raised, we know that what God has promised, he can do, because Jesus was raised from the dead. So we're in a far better position than they are.

They needed faith only in scripture. We have evidence. We have proof.

And so Jesus' promise to her is real. Verse 26, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? Romans chapter 6 verse 22, but now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end, everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Revelation 17, and I'm going to read three verses in Revelation 17 in closing. Verse 15, therefore, they are before the throne

of God and serve him day and night in his temple.

And he who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat for the lamb who's in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eye. Father, we thank you for the glorious hope of the resurrection. Lord, I don't personally, I don't know how people live life not knowing that there is eternal life.

But Lord, I thank you that you've promised us eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. And Lord, that we are in a far more, more blessed position than those in the Old Testament who simply had to believe scripture. And Lord, scripture is enough.

It is sufficient for us to believe. And yet in your grace, you've proven your ability to raise the dead by raising Jesus from the dead. And that he now ever lives at the right hand of the majesty on high.

And so Father, we thank you that you have not called us to a blind faith, but a faith that can be proven as much as Jesus proved the resurrection from that scripture, which they never even thought about in the book of Exodus. Lord, I pray that you'd help us to have the right perspective. Lord, forgive us for so many times being like the Sadducees, having an earthly perspective, looking at things in dollars and pennies and power and influence and control and the things of this life.

But Lord, help us to see things in eternal value, in eternal terms. Lord, help us to build and to store up treasures in heaven where moss does not rust and does not eat and rust does not consume. Lord, I pray that you'd help us to have our eyes fixed on heaven.

Help us, Lord, to particularly in these times when things are more and more difficult in this world, Lord, help us to have our eyes increasingly fixed on eternal life. Lord, at the end, we want to also acknowledge that this would not have been possible without Jesus dying for us at that cross of Calvary. And so, Lord, we thank you for his death that bought us life, that we might live forever.

And so, Lord, we thank you for this hope that we have. We thank you for this assurance that we have. And Lord, as we come to remember Henry's influence amongst us in these last seven years, Lord, we thank you that we know with assurance, not with a remote hope or maybe, but absolute assurance that he is in your presence this morning.

And so, we bless you for the hope that is ours, that, Lord, we do not sorrow as those in the world who have no hope, but, Lord, that we know in whom we have believed and we know that he is able to keep what we have committed unto him even against that day. And so, Lord, we pray that you'd continue amongst us this morning and the rest of our meeting together. And, Lord, when we part a little later, we pray that you'd go with us, keep us, and protect us, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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