

When I was at Bible College, in the preaching classes, we were taught to always kick off a message, by telling a story, and that's sorta the "hook" that gets people listening. ...

I'm not sure that's always true.

We've been working our way through the Gospel of Luke, and the topic we're up to today, is "The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Life." And let me tell you: If we need some kind of gripping story or funny joke, to get us interested in hearing what Jesus has to say about:

- the after-life; and
- eternal life; and
- what Jesus has to say about "the dead" "who live"...

If that's not captivating enough on its own, there's gotta be something wrong with us...

You see, God has created us humans, not just as physical beings – we are also spiritual beings. Whether a person is a Christian or not,,,, they **are** a spiritual being. Some may have a spirit that is dead/oppressed/hardened; Others (thank God) have a spirit that is **alive** and communes with the Spirit of God... But every one of us, is a spiritual being.

Why is that?

When God created man, He created us in His own image. He took the dirt, and made it into a man. And then He did something else that He did for no animal. He breathed His own breath, into the nostrils of man, and he came alive.

Humans are **not** simply another animal. We are created in the image of God; and we are given life by the **breath** of God.

And in Isaiah 42:5 it describes God as the one:

who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk in it:

God has created every one of us as spiritual beings. **That**, (and the fact that God created us in His own image), is the difference between humans and animals. And this is why the People of God, have such a very high regard for human life.

When a person dies, their body dies, but their spirit does not. And what happens to our Spirit, following death, depends upon how we relate to God.

Righto:

That's the introduction. Let's start at the beginning.

Jesus had His critics. And as far as critics go, they were pretty harsh. They didn't only want to bag-him-out – a lot of them wanted to kill Him... And His **harshest** critics were the religious leaders (**all** persuasions) – there were lots of different parties.

There were:

- scribes;

- priests;
- Pharisees;
- Sadducees....

And a lot of the time, these parties didn't get on with each other. They had different:

- beliefs;
- levels of authority;
- job descriptions;
- emphases on what they saw as important...

But they found a common enemy in Jesus. This is something they could pretty-much agree on.

And today, we meet a group called the Sadducees... And the Sadducees do not believe in eternal life.

I was a very young lad – I don't reckon I would've even been a teenager, when a man told me how to remember the difference between a Pharisee and a Sadducee... The Sadducees do not believe in eternal life, and so they are sad, you see...

The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, and so they are sad you see...

Nor, did they believe in angels; - it seems like they were quite worldly minded sorts of blokes, and they didn't go much, on spiritual stuff...

And there are a lot of people in the world today, who are like that: People who do not want to consider the afterlife and

what happens after we die... They don't accept that we are "spirit", and the Spirit lives on...

And sadly, there are some folk who call themselves "Christians", who believe that too... There's a movement called "Progressive Christianity" (It's a very bad name). They're very proud and arrogant, and make the claim "Oh, we're progressive"... But it's not progressive at all.

They don't believe:

- in the virgin birth;
- in the resurrection of Jesus;
- that we will be raised from the dead;

And pretty-much what they do believe: they strip away all of the supernatural power of God, and they're left with an image of a god of their own design...

And they call it "progressive". It's not **progressive**. It's **regressive**. It was Ecclesiastes that said "**There's nothing new under the sun**". Basically, they take the same view as the Sadducees did...

Anyway,

the Sadducees posed a question to Jesus, which they thought was a slam-dunk, and would prove their case that the resurrection of the dead, was a load of nonsense:

One of the Old Testament Laws (Deuteronomy 25), said that if a man died (before he produced an heir), then it was his **brother's** duty to marry his wife... *And at this point, some of*

us are probably going “Ewww”. Yeah I know... (No offence to my Brother’s Wife. Jodie’s a very nice lady, but I’ve got my own wife)...

And the first son that was produced from that marriage, would be counted as being the heir of the bloke who had died. And that did two things:

1. It meant the inheritance and the family line was carried on, and
2. the widow wasn’t left destitute, with no one to provide for her, and no one to look after her in her old age....

Anyway, the Sadducees said, “That’s the Law, but we know of this situation where this woman married a bloke, and he died. So she married a brother; and he died; Married the next brother; and he died; Married the next brother; and he died....

Now, I don’t know about you, but I reckon I’d be checking the kitchen cupboard to make sure there’s no strychnine or arsenic hidden in there. ...

Anyway, their point was, she’d had 7 different husbands, and still no child,, **If** there was an after-life, how would that get sorted out? – Got ya there – Whose wife would she be?

But there was a big problem with their logic.

They thought that the next life, was going to look very much like this life... But the thing is, when Jesus returns, and His

new Kingdom comes, it is, an entirely new age. Things will **not** be the same.

I reckon we'd be sorely disappointed if things stayed the same, wouldn't we...

You see, Jesus didn't teach reincarnation, where you come back to life again as another animal, to live in the same world all over again... Jesus didn't teach "reincarnation". He taught "resurrection"...

Marriage is something that happens in **this** age. We need to have families, to bring children up in. ... But in the **next** age, there will be no death. We won't need families and children, to grow up and replace those who are dying...

And so, in this regard, we'll be like the Angels. (Angels don't breed)...

Now, some of you might be sad about that,, and I may have just burst your bubble.

You may love your husband or your wife so much, that you cannot bear the thought of **not** being married to them in heaven... I'm sorry, I can't help you out there... Jesus made it clear: We will not be married in heaven... Some might breathe a sigh of relief. Some might be devastated...

I had one widow tell me once, She didn't want to go to heaven if her husband wasn't going to be there... Now, a statement

like that, says more about one's relationship with God, than what it does about their relationship with their spouse...

And some of you might want to ask, "But will we at least have a "special" relationship with our spouse in the age to come?" I don't know. Maybe... We're not told, so we don't know.

But I want to encourage you with **this**, because this we **do** know:

For those whose marriage in this life, is so good, you don't want to ever be without it — For husbands and wives who love each other, and enjoy each other so much, you cannot imagine living without them, **lucky you**. You are blessed,,, because you have experienced a little taste – you have caught a little glimpse (an imperfect picture, but a little glimpse), **of how good our relationship will be, with Jesus**.

It's not by accident that when Jesus returns, we are given an image of the church (Christians) being presented to Him in His bride... **That**, is the depth of loving relationship we will have with our Lord... And if you haven't experienced a good marriage, you wait until you are united with Christ, in the age to come... And Wow! What a blessing it will be.

So, the Sadducees got it wrong because they thought the Next Age would be a re-run of this one...

And the **second** thing the Sadducees had wrong, is they didn't know the Scripture.

The Sadducees didn't give the same level of authority to all of the books of the Old Testament. So, Jesus quoted from a part of the bible that they **did** believe had authority (Torah) (1st 5 books of the Bible). He pointed them to Exodus 3, a well-known passage, at the Burning Bush, where God revealed His Name to Moses, and who He is – the God of Abraham; Isaac; Jacob...

He is not God of the Dead – He is God of the living.

So, what was so special about the fore-fathers (patriarchs) (Abraham; Isaac; Jacob)?

They each did different things, but they had one thing in common. They all had faith, and they all were in relationship with God.

Death, cannot break, one's relationship with God...

Did you get that? I'm going to say it again: Death, cannot break, your relationship with God...

It was the Apostle Paul who said: (in Romans 8), that **Nothing** can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Not even death).

Here Jesus said: ³⁸ ... he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.

When a person dies, to us, they're gone. All that's left, is the physical shell (the body that we bury or cremate)... But to God, they are not dead. Their spirit lives on. It leaves their body,,,,, but for those who are in a committed, loving relationship with God: Death cannot break that relationship... And so, to God, they are alive...

And I need to back us up a bit here, because there's something I skipped over. Jesus said:

"The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Not **everyone**, is a son of the resurrection. Not **every** person, will attain this new age of the resurrection from the dead... , It's only those who are considered worthy

So, who **is** considered worthy? Who **will be** the Sons of God? Who **are** the Sons of the resurrection??? It is those who are in relationship with God.

You see, the next age isn't about knowing who your spouse is going to be. It's about knowing God, and being known by God.

Knowing God, and being known by God, is all tied up with who Christ is.

You see, the religious leaders, they were waiting for the Christ/Messiah,, and here's Jesus ("Hello"), but they were rejecting Him.

They believed that the Messiah would be of the same vein as the great king of the past (King David). But Jesus draws their attention to the fact that even the great King David called the Messiah "Lord".

The Messiah (Jesus), would be greater than King David.

And on the day of the resurrection (when Jesus returns), He comes as the **King** for the Sons and the Daughters of the resurrection.

So, who are the ones who are worthy? It is those who receive Jesus as Lord. I cannot be in relationship with God, if I reject His Son.

Now, it's all good-&-nice to talk about the day of Resurrection, but we also need to talk about the Day of Judgment... Why? Because Jesus did...

What becomes of the Spirit, of those who are **not** sons of the resurrection? It ain't good. The enemies of Jesus will be

made a footstool for His feet. And in v47 Jesus uses the phrase: **They will receive the greater condemnation...**

You see, just as death cannot **break** ones relationship with God,, neither does death magically **create** a relationship with God.

Some folk just want to float on through life, and they have no time for God in this life, but they expect that “**If** there is a resurrection, then God will be glad to meet me...”

Not so...

Even those who are **religious** on the outside, and do not have a genuine relationship with God, are **not** sons of the Resurrection.

When Jesus shot down the Sadducees argument, another religious party (the Scribes) chimed in, “Good on You, Jesus... Good job. Well said.” (because they didn’t like the Sadducees).

But Jesus said to His disciples (and He said it loud enough that everyone could hear):

- Beware of the Scribes.
- They like to walk around in their long, fancy robes.
- They love getting official greetings in the market place.

- They love getting the best seats at church; and
- they love getting given a place of honour at a feast....

But it's all show. Even their big long prayers, are a pretence (it's just for appearances sake)...

The truth of the matter, is they have a godless heart. He used the phrase “**devour widows' houses**”. Now, we don't know exactly what Jesus was referring to there, but we do know what He was getting at...

Taking advantage of the vulnerable, is blatant godlessness.

The Scribes oozed empty, showy religion, and that is something that God hates.

So in all of this, Jesus has made it clear:

- religious appearances, count for nothing;
- clever theological arguments, count for nothing;
- **Pretending** to love being in communion with God (with their long, showy prayers), counts for nothing...

So, what **does** it take, to be considered worthy of resurrection and of the age to come???

Well, because today is our Bush Kids Sunday School presentation, I'm going to use the phrase, “Having a child-like faith.”. That's all it takes.

- Knowing God;
- Being known **by** God;
- Trusting in God;
- Receiving Jesus as Lord and Saviour;
- Repenting of sin; and
- following Jesus as His Disciple,,,

All of this....

But ultimately, it is Jesus Christ Himself, who makes us worthy...

Are you in relationship with God?

On the day of the resurrection, will you be a son of the resurrection???

If you want to be, let's pray this prayer together.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father,
We want to thank you,
that death cannot break a relationship with You.

And so I surrender myself to You now.

Lord,

forgive me for the evil I have done.
Forgive me, for the sin of rejecting You.
Forgive me, for the times where I have ignored You.

Lord, we want to Know You.
And to be known, **by** You.
We commit to serve You and honour You,
with every last day that we have to live.

And we thank You,
for the forgiveness You graciously give,
in the Name of Jesus.

Lord,
change our hearts.
Count us worthy of the age of the resurrection of the
Dead.

And Lord, we look forward to that day.
We eagerly await that day.
We long to be presented
(along with all of Your faithful children)
We long to be presented as the Bride of Christ.

By the blood of Jesus,
make us worthy we pray....

And on this day of Bush Kids Sunday School
Presentation,
we pray for all these children.

Lord we pray that as **they** grow up,
they would know You,
and be known **by** You,
that they also would be
Sons and Daughters of God,
and Sons and Daughters of the resurrection.

in Jesus' Name,
Amen.

ⁱ Ecclesiastes 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.