

Sermon Luke 20 27 40 25th Sunday after Pentecost Series C

Sermon: 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Luke 20:27-40 (v. 36b)

Theme: The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting

Goal: To assure God's plan for us after our death

Dear Friends in the Living Christ,

Introduction: To preserve ones' name in Biblical times was not just a matter of the name, but it was a matter of the property and of the land of that family, a matter of inheritance. So, the situation presented by the Sadducees to Jesus could have been very real: If someone died without children, one of the brothers had to raise a child from the widow to bear the name of the deceased. It was written in the Law of Moses.

However, the question raised didn't have the concern about property, name or law, but to challenge Jesus about the resurrection of the body.

I – No resurrection - no hope

The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, neither in angels nor in spirits (Acts 23:8). They were a very influential sect among the Jews, but extremely secularized. Even the High Priest was a Sadducee. On the other hand, the Pharisees were more conservative and believed in the traditional doctrines of the Old Testament. But both groups had a common platform: they were opponents of Jesus and one after the other were trying "to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor" (Luke 20:20).

The story, which was about seven brothers who had died one after the other without leaving a child from the same women, raised curiosity among Jesus' listeners and even among the opponents, who reacted positively to Jesus answer saying: "Well said, teacher!"

How will it be in the resurrection of the body? “Whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” – The Sadducees wanted to hold Jesus and the belief in the eternal life up to ridicule.

We still have “Sadducees” nowadays. Like late followers of a Greek philosopher named Epicurus (307 B.C.), they just enjoy life and pleasure. The apostle Paul quoted Epicurus in his big chapter about Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:32) and said: “If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” Many people live this way even if they have never heard about Epicurus. They ignore that there can be another life after this life, and they confront the Law of God and the law of men doing whatever gives them pleasure.

Subtle Sadducees are very common among our society and even inside the church. They don’t confront the Christian faith about resurrection and eternal life, but the way they live shows no concern about their future and the life to come. Jesus described them in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23) as those “who hear the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke them, making them unfruitful”.

Anyway, for those who deny resurrection and eternal life in words or in deeds there is no hope. - The crucified and resurrected Jesus has to be shown to them to wake them up from their spiritual death before it is too late...

## II – The resurrection in the Old Testament

Jesus quoted from the Second Book of Moses to show that God “is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive”. Jesus mentioned the appearance of God to Moses in the bush (our OT reading for today) and how God revealed Himself as “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6), the God of the living!

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had passed away more than 400 years before Moses’ encounter with God. But they are still alive with God.

Isaiah <sup>(26:19)</sup> says: “But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You, who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy.”

Job <sup>(19:25-27)</sup> confessed: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes – I, and not another.”

There is no doubt about the resurrection of the body in the Old Testament. But some people, like the Sadducees were, are blind and deaf to God’s revelation. They don’t believe and they don’t have hope, unfortunately. - The crucified and resurrected Jesus has to be shown to them to wake them up from their spiritual death before it is too late...

### III – The Resurrection of Jesus

When Jesus rose again from the dead, He confirmed once for all God’s gracious plan for the future of all believers. Paul wrote, arguing against those who were denying the resurrection: “But Christ had indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” <sup>(1</sup>

Corinthians 15:20). This is the core of the Christian faith, which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. And this fills our life with hope! We can look forward secure that God has a good plan for us and for all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ, who “was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” <sup>(Romans 4:25).</sup>

### IV – Our Resurrection and Eternal Life

Therefore we confess in the Apostles’ Creed: *I believe... in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.* Jesus gives us great comfort in this Gospel when He affirms about the departed: “They are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection!” The reality in heaven is different from the reality on earth. “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for

those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). John wrote: “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3).

Conclusion: I received a Power Point this week that matches well with this issue we are presenting today: A famous preacher was invited to do a presentation to the Theology students in the University of Chicago. He was a liberal theologian. He spent two and half hours “proving” that the resurrection of Jesus was not real, that the witness of the disciples couldn’t be proved, that Jesus was still dead, etc. etc. At the end of his speech, one of the students stood up and raised a question. The student was eating an apple. He asked the Professor: What do you think: Is this apple I am eating sweet or sour? The professor replied: I don’t know; I didn’t taste your apple. – So, -said the student, - how can you affirm what you said and deny the resurrection of Jesus if you have never tasted MY JESUS?

The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting is a matter of faith in God’s promise. When I believe, I have the blessing, the comfort and the hope. If I do not believe, I remain in my sins, I remain hopeless...

God says through the Psalmist (34:8): “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.” Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town, 10 November 2013