

Text: Luke 20: 27-38
Theme: "Questions That Don't Matter"
#1021

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So, who's your favorite funeral director?! Think hard; is it someone from Schoeneberger's in Perham, Glende-Nilson in Battle Lake, Olson's in Fergus Falls, or Karvonen's in Henning? Does this sound a little strange? I know funeral directors are a 'dying group' but they are really important people in our society. I know them all and they're all really great people.

So, in the resurrection from the dead, do you think there will be funeral directors?

Of course not! There won't be any need for funeral directors in heaven, will there? In the resurrection of the dead, when we all are given new life with new bodies, there won't be any more death.

This sounds silly doesn't it? Well, when Jesus had a question posed Him by the Sadducees, a sect of Judaism that didn't believe in the resurrection; Jesus must have felt the same way.

The Sadducees thought they could trap Jesus into making a statement that contradicted what was written in the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible. Posing a hypothetical question about a woman who had seven husbands, they wanted Jesus to tell them whose wife she would be in the resurrection.

Instead, this text gives us a chance to think about what the Resurrection is all about. If we go back to my example about the funeral director, I think it's pretty obvious **why** funeral directors will be out of work in heaven. Jesus doesn't say much about heaven--what things will be like, what we'll do there, and so on—but He does give us the impression that things will be **radically different** than they are here in this life. There will be no more pain, no more suffering, no hunger, no oppression or persecution, no more death, no more births, no more weddings. So I guess the Resurrection will put pastors out of business as well! Jesus said that **for those who are considered worthy**, of the Kingdom of God, these things will not matter. God created marriage to give companionship, love, and a fulfilling life to people here on earth. Marriage also has the role of procreation: God established marriage to be the sanctuary of the family, to ensure the continuation of the human species. Jesus plainly states that marriage will not be necessary in the Age to Come.

I sometimes hear about those 'questions' we are going to ask Jesus when we get to heaven; you know—those important things like, “why mosquitoes?” Or, “did the cute little skunk **really** have to smell that bad?” I might be asking about those nasty deer ticks given my recent run ins! There might be some other questions we have been saving, but I tend to

believe that when we reach our Home and are in the Presence of our Savior, ***nothing else will matter***. All those questions will disappear. Our fears will vanish. Our anxieties will not even be a distant memory—they will be wiped away and forgotten. Everything will be focused on where we are and the joy of being in the Presence of our Lord and Savior.

But here today we still have questions. Jesus doesn't try to explain the concept of resurrection. He doesn't describe the details of what the resurrection will entail. He leaves a lot to our very vivid imaginations. It's important to note that this text comes during what is now called Holy Week for Jesus. It was after Palm Sunday's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It was just a few days before the cross. So it comes just a short time before Jesus does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. In the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, we have His living testimony of what is to come.

Jesus didn't just ***tell us*** about the resurrection, ***Jesus showed us!*** He showed what it was all about: Jesus was raised from death. He lay dead in the tomb from Friday until dawn on Sunday, the first Easter. He walked out of the tomb which the angels of God had opened, but He left the grave clothes lying in a pile as if He just vaporized out of them. He let Thomas touch Him. He showed them His wounds. He ate fish and bread

by the sea. He walked **through** locked doors, but He walked, talked, and ate with believers on their way to Emmaus.

We regularly confess that we believe in “the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” Our faith teaches that we too, will be raised on the Last Day, the Day when Jesus has promised to come again and take us to the Father. Our knowledge of what’s to come is fueled by what Jesus has done and what He has promised us. We will be raised. Death has no power over us. Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the devil, therefore we need not fear the grave—it is but the gateway to eternal life.

Our God is the God of the living. God sees things much differently than we see things. In Jesus we have the Promise of a future that is brighter and better than we can ever imagine. We don’t, therefore, need to worry about the future. We can spend our time here helping others understand what it means to be a child of God. There are studies that are being done that truly question if there will be a church in as little as 30 years. Will the ELCA be relevant to a new generation? Will the story of Jesus and the Resurrection mean anything?

We, along with the Holy Spirit, have a lot to say about this! Will we let this happen? Are we willing to roll up our sleeves and make sure that there will be a Church—a faithful following of Christian believers—in the future?

We may not need funeral directors in heaven, but we do need each other here and now to share the work of the Kingdom of God so that there will be a strong, vibrant, and relevant Church when Jesus returns.

AMEN

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