

Heaven

Luke 20:27 ~ 38

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NOVEMBER 10, 2019

In today's Gospel, we meet the Sadducees. These were the ones, who did not believe in the resurrection, their question, therefore, dealt with the other world, the afterlife. They asked Jesus a hypothetical question about a woman who was widowed seven times in succession. In heaven, whose husband will she be? To them this was a question that pointed out the total absurdity of the thought of an afterlife.

Jesus answered by saying: *In the resurrection people will neither marry nor will they be given in marriage.* In other words, Jesus is saying that Heaven is on another dimension. It will not be there like it is here. There is no marriage. Jesus shows that they have asked a question, which has a faulty premise. Unlike the other answer, this one is very direct.

But then Jesus goes on to address himself to the real issue that is being raised. He said: *God is the God of the living and not of the dead.* Now, what did he mean by that? He is saying to the Sadducees: You are concerning yourself with the afterlife and the problem is that you have not learned to live life here and now. Heaven is not our responsibility. That is God's responsibility. What is our responsibility is how we live life here and now. The Sadducees were at a loss for words, and quietly they returned to their seats.

When Jesus speaks of the God of the living, he is prodding

his critics to expand their vision. In effect, says William Willimon, Jesus is saying to that group of critical Sadducees, *"Your questions betray your limited point of view, your narrow frame of reference. The resurrection is not just some extension of your world. It is a whole new world, the world as God intended the world to be."* It is a world in which the woman of your story is "a child of God, not a piece of property." It is a world in which each of us lives as *Children of the Resurrection*.

Many of you know Charles de Gaulle as the famous French WWII soldier, statesman, author, President of France. What you probably did not know was that Charles and Evonne deGaulle were the parents of a very mentally handicapped child. She was a treasure and a great concern to them both. No matter how bad things were in France, Charles would always make time for he and his Evonne to have time with their daughter. Almost every night after they had put her to bed, Evonne would ask, "Charles, why couldn't she have been like the others?"

As predicted, the little girl died in her youth. There was a private graveside service. After the priest had pronounced the benediction, everyone began to leave, everyone except Evonne. Charles went back to her and said, *"Come, Evonne. Did you not hear the blessing of the priest? Now she is like all the others."*

That is the promise and the power of Resurrection!