

Week 4

Sunday

This is the fifth week of our series called, "Good News." This week, we are looking at the Good News about death. We have noted that the Good News requires context and at times it requires facing some brutal facts. We live in a culture that often doesn't like to remember the brutal fact of our death. We love youth and often search for ways to remain forever young; meanwhile, we know intellectually that our bodies will eventually age and wear out. At some point, our bodies break down and stop working no matter how well we take care of them.

We do not like to talk about death or face death and yet a question remains for us: What happens after we die? That is a strange question on the surface, isn't it? We have seen people after death. We dress them up and put them in a casket and then bury them in the ground. Or we cremate them and put their ashes in an urn. That's what happens to you after you die. The end.

Yet, that answer seems so unsatisfactory for both us and for the people we love who have gone before us. For death to have the final word does not seem right or just. We long for something more beyond just this life. We long for a life after death that is better than this life. We long to see our loved ones again. We long to be able to tell a mother who has lost a son that she will see him again and for it to be real and true, not just empty words.

C.S. Lewis notes, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this life can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we have been made for another world." Every longing we experience brings fulfillment. We hunger for food and there is food. We thirst and it can be satisfied with water or, better yet, a glass of wine or beer. We desire friendship and companionship and we connect with people who love us. We long for a next life and so it would make sense that there is one.

Share your longing for something more than this life with God. Pray this week that you will grow to a greater understanding of the Good News that God offers.

Monday

Some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, came forward and put this question to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, if someone's brother dies leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother."

Luke 20:27

In the verse above, we learn something else about the Sadducees. They denied the resurrection as well as any life after death. What's the difference? Most people believe in life after death. There are many different ideas about what that might mean. Maybe it means going up into the

clouds and playing harps all day. For some, the idea is that it is a great place of rest. For some, it means joining with all of life. Everything will be united and we will be one as a drop of water in the larger ocean. Followers of many Eastern religions believe in reincarnation.

The Sadducees thought you died and that was it, which meant they also denied the resurrection. This is why they were Sadducees – they were sad you see. That’s an old bible joke.

Resurrection proposes a specific understanding of what life after death means. Resurrection proposes that it is not just our souls that continue after death but that we will be raised from the dead – body and soul. We will be united with God but retain our individuality. The Sadducees thought that resurrection was an absurd idea. Bodies don’t rise from the dead. They thought that just wasn’t possible.

What do you believe about life after death? Bring it to God in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and your heart to a better understanding of the life God wants for you in the next life.

Tuesday

Now there were seven brothers; the first married a woman but died childless. Then the second and the third married her, and likewise all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. Now at the resurrection whose wife will that woman be? For all seven had been married to her.”

Jesus said to them, “The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.” Jesus continues, “They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise.”

Luke 20:29-36

Jesus says there is no marriage in heaven and so the legal issues regarding marriage won’t apply to the next life or what Jesus calls the next age. They are laws for this time but they will pass away in the same way that many laws in the past have become obsolete.

Jesus says in the next age we will be like the angels. He does not say we will become angels. So although “It’s A Wonderful Life” is a great movie, its theology is not correct. We don’t become angels hoping to get our wings when we die. We become like angels in the sense that we will live forever. We are eternal and experience God’s presence continually.

Thank God today that he has created you to have eternal life.

Wednesday

That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called out 'Lord,' the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." Some of the scribes said in reply, "Teacher, you have answered well." And they no longer dared to ask him anything.

Luke 20:37-40

Jesus references the book of Genesis. This is significant because the Sadducees only accepted the Torah or the first five books of the Bible, which includes Genesis. Jesus says that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. God is eternal. God is life and anyone connected to him is alive. Anyone in relationship with God is alive.

Jesus answered with such authority and so convincingly that the Sadducees couldn't answer back. Now that of course does not mean there is a resurrection or prove that Jesus was right. It just proved that Jesus was smarter and could out-argue the Sadducees.

What ultimately proves the resurrection or why we should believe in the resurrection of the body is because Jesus rose from the dead. On Good Friday, Jesus' body was bloodied, broken, and obliterated. Three days later, he rose from the dead. His resurrection is the core of the Good News. Jesus promises because he rose, we too will rise. He is the first to rise from the dead but not the last. We will receive resurrected bodies like his.

Thank Jesus that he is risen. If you struggle to believe in the resurrection, ask God to reveal it to you.

Thursday

For the perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and the mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is **swallowed** up in **victory**."

"O death, where is your **victory**? O death, where is your **sting**?"

The **sting** of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 15:52-57

The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians talks exclusively about the resurrection. Paul explains to the Corinthians that Jesus' resurrection is the foundational element of the Good News. He

then explains that just as Jesus was given an imperishable body at his resurrection, we too will receive an imperishable body. Through the resurrection, death is swallowed up in victory. It will be like death never existed. Through the resurrection, death and pain will lose all their sting. Jesus' resurrection brings victory over every defeat.

In the next life, all the losses of this life will be undone. That's what the resurrection promises. It is incredibly Good News. It is the best news possible. Take a moment to re-read the verses above. Read them slowly and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and your heart to their promises.

Friday

Jesus is the head of the body, the Church; he is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in everything, he might be pre-eminent.

Colossians 1:18

Jesus is the first to rise from the dead, but he is not the last. Since he rose victorious over death, we too will rise.

In his book *Simply Good News*, N.T. Wright notes, "The whole truth is that Jesus himself, in his risen physical body, is the beginning of God's new creation. He not only presides over that new creation; he is that new creation, in person. Everything about the larger Christian hope follows from this. 'He is the start of it all,' writes Paul, 'firstborn from realms of the dead; so in all things he might be chief' (Col. 1:18). This is where the good news provides the launching pad, not for people to go to heaven but for people to discover that God's new world has begun, and we can be part of it. Welcome to the full meaning of the good news."

Thank God that the resurrection launched the new world that God has begun and that we get to be a part of it.

Saturday

**Remember the marvels the Lord has done!**

Sing to him, sing his praise,  
proclaim all his wondrous deeds.  
Glory in his holy name;  
rejoice, O hearts that seek the LORD!

**Remember the marvels the Lord has done!**

Then he struck every first born throughout their land,  
the first fruits of all their manhood.  
And he led them forth laden with silver and gold,  
with not a weakling among their tribes.

**Remember the marvels the Lord has done!**

For he remembered his holy word  
to his servant Abraham.  
And he led forth his people with joy;  
with shouts of joy, his chosen ones.

**Remember the marvels the Lord has done!**

Psalm 105