

Heaven

What about Relationships in Heaven? • Message 7

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray for trust in God's promise to make all things complete.
- Pray that God would heal what others cannot see.
- Pray that our church would be a safe place for hurting hearts.

Worship Psalm:

"Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!"

Psalm 34:3 (ESV)

Scripture Reading:

Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.

"Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Luke 20:27-38 (NIV)

A. Introduction

The Sadducees were a priestly group associated with the Jerusalem temple. Luke specifically says *they deny that there is a resurrection* (Luke 20:27). Their question they pose to Jesus is not sincere pastoral curiosity. They are trying to make belief in the resurrection look absurd.

They build their trap from the law of levirate marriage in Deuteronomy 25:5–10. If a man died childless, his brother was to marry the widow so that the dead brother's name and inheritance could continue in Israel. The Sadducees imagine seven brothers marrying the same woman one after another, then ask: *In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be?* (Luke 20:33).

Their mistake is that they assume resurrection life is merely this present life extended indefinitely. They imagine the age to come is still operating by death, inheritance, family succession, scarcity, and marital possession. Jesus answers by saying, *You are thinking about the structures of this dying age and putting them into the age of resurrection where there is no death.*

Their question uses marriage as a weapon against resurrection. The woman in the story is treated less like a person to be loved and more like a theological problem to be solved. That matters because many people's questions about heaven involve real grief: spouses, miscarried children, parents, friends, and trauma. Jesus does not mock hope in the resurrection; He defends it.

So today, I want you to see three ways that Jesus reframes the conversation around loved ones in heaven.

B. What about Relationships in Heaven?

1.) HEAVEN is DIFFERENT.

(Luke 20:34-36. C/R: Revelation 21:5)

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection."

Luke 20:34-36 (NIV)

The Sadducees assumed that heaven was just more of earth. Same relationships, same institutions, same problems, and even death.

But Jesus contrasts this age and the age to come.

Jesus is saying that life in the new age isn't just more of the same; it is a transformed life. It is a new heaven and new earth where death has been defeated.

No more pain, no more suffering, no more loss, no more grief.

I think some of us might be similar to the Sadducees. We might imagine heaven like earth, but with a few upgrades.

It's the way we think about almost everything. When a new phone comes out, we expect a better camera, a faster processor, and a longer battery life. When we buy a newer car, we look for more features, better technology, and a smoother ride. We don't expect something completely different; we expect an improved version of what we already know.

Sometimes we approach heaven the same way. We think of it as life here with a few upgrades.

No sickness, no bills, no funerals.

But Jesus describes something much more than just an upgraded version of our lives. Heaven is much bigger than that.

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Revelation 21:5 (NIV)

Jesus says that He is making everything new! New life with Jesus. No fear, death, shame, or pain.

And that raises an important question.

If the world to come is so different from this one, what happens to the relationships that matter most to us now?

What happens to marriage? What happens to family? What happens to the people we love?

That's exactly where the Sadducees' question was aimed. They wanted to know how earthly relationships would function in the resurrection.

And Jesus' answer is surprising. He doesn't diminish the importance of our relationships. He reveals that in the resurrection, they will be transformed by something even greater.

2.) LOVE is PERFECTED.

(Luke 20:34-36. C/R: Genesis 2:24-25; Ephesians 5:25-27)

When we hear that marriage is not happening in heaven, people feel disappointed.

In fact, I want to show you a clip of a conversation that I'm sure many of you have had if you are a Christian couple.

Some even wonder:

- *Does that mean I won't know my spouse?*
- *Does that mean my marriage won't matter anymore?*
- *Does that mean I'll lose one of the most important relationships of my life?*

But that's not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is not diminishing marriage. He is explaining that there is something greater.

Marriage is one of God's greatest gifts.

From the very beginning, God declared that it was not good for man to be alone.

God created marriage, He blesses it and intends it as one of the clearest pictures of His love for His people.

In Ephesians 5, Paul tells us that marriage points to Christ and His Church.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NIV)

In other words, marriage was never intended to be the destination; marriage was a sign.

A sign is valuable. Think about stop signs. Incredibly valuable. But show of hands, who loves it when people stay at the stop sign?

We are not meant to stay at the sign. Every healthy marriage, every godly relationship, is intended to point us to God. All of these relationships point us to what is ultimately found in Christ. All the love, intimacy, belonging, and security are all things that are ultimately found in our relationship with Jesus.

And for many married couples, that raises another question: What about sexual intimacy?

Jesus tells us that marriage belongs to this age, but He does not specifically tell us whether any form of sexual intimacy exists in the age to come.

Scripture simply does not answer that question directly.

What we do know is that sex was God's idea. God created it. God called it good. God designed it as a gift within marriage.

So whatever the experience of heaven is like, we should not imagine that God is taking away something good and replacing it with something lesser.

The God who created sexual intimacy is not preparing a future that is less joyful, less satisfying, or less fulfilling than His gifts in this life.

If marriage is a sign, then even the deepest joys of marriage, including sex, are pointing us to a greater reality that we will experience in heaven.

And whatever God has prepared for His people in His presence will far surpass even the best experiences of this age.

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 2:24-25 (NIV)

God originally created us, and we lived with no shame. I know many of you chuckle at this idea, but nakedness wasn't really the point. It was that they felt completely comfortable being their full human self in front of another full human being in a relationship with the Lord.

Many of us in this room bring so much relational experience to this conversation.

For widows and widowers: your grief is not a sign of weak faith. It is the ache of a real love in a world still under death.

For those who remarried after loss: the resurrection will not be relational confusion or competition. No redeemed person will be diminished, displaced, or jealous.

For singles: resurrection life is not second-class because it is not organized around marriage. In Christ, no one enters heaven incomplete. For some of you, this is reason to cheer and celebrate!

Marriage doesn't end because love is dead in heaven. Love in its fulfillment in marriage is too great.

I think it is okay to remember that God created marriage. If God created marriage and it is a great thing in a fallen and sinful world, do we believe that God could create a world that functions even more amazingly with the presence of sin removed?

In the resurrection, you will not love your spouse less. You will love them more truly, without fear, possessiveness, jealousy, loss, idolatry, or death.

Imagine all of that relationship stuff that nags you, irks you, and frustrates you, and recognize that you and your husband and your family members are perfect and complete. Not only the things that irk you, but how about how wonderful they are... how loving, supportive, caring, protective, and proactive they are. All of these will be more fully realized in heaven. How wonderful does that sound?

So if marriage isn't ultimate, what is?

3.) Jesus is the CENTER of every RELATIONSHIP.

(Luke 20:37-38. C/R: 2 Samuel 12:23; Matthew 17:1-4; John 11:23)

"But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Luke 20:37-38 (NIV)

After speaking about marriage, Jesus stops talking about marriage and talked about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Sadducees asked a question about a woman and seven husbands, but Jesus talks about God's relationship with His people.

Why?

Because our hope is not in our earthly relationships. God is our eternal hope.

All these men that Jesus mentioned are dead. But death did not erase these men. Death did not get the final word. God did!

One of the most common questions we got about heaven is, *Will I recognize my loved ones in heaven?*

While that question is never directly asked or answered in Scripture, we have evidence that we can point people to.

First, the Transfiguration:

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Matthew 17:1-4 (NIV)

They are recognizable. They are distinct. They are alive in the presence of God.

Also, when Jesus spoke to Martha about her brother, he said:

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

John 11:23 (NIV)

Jesus didn't say a spiritual part of your brother will continue on.

And we have a picture of Jesus resurrected from the dead with real wounds on His wrists. Thomas asked to touch them.

I also think, you should pray about it, that there will only be one person in heaven with wounds that are not fully healed and that person is Jesus.

So I do not believe that the resurrection will make us less human or less of ourselves, but we will be the best possible version of ourselves.

What about miscarriages or lost children?

I think that the Bible gives us some clarity on having children that we lost in heaven with us.

First, we recognize that life begins at conception, which means that children, regardless of being physically born or not, are known by God. They have DNA, which means they have all of the building blocks needed for their appearance, personality, and likeness.

Second, we have evidence of David expressing that he would go to his child one day.

“But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

2 Samuel 12:23 (NIV)

David did not say, *I am going to the place where he is*, but he is going to him. John MacArthur said, *heaven is the place of perfect reunions*.

If you are a parent who has lost a child, first I want to just say I am so sorry. I don't know of any greater pain than that. But entrust your children to the Lord, the One who loves children, conquered death, hell, and the grave, and works out all things for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Conclusion

As we've walked through this passage today, we've seen that Jesus gives us a bigger vision of heaven than many of us have imagined.

Heaven is not simply more of this life. It is resurrection life. Relationships are not erased; they are transformed.

And the people God loves are not lost. They are held securely in His hands.

But as we close, I think it's important to recognize why questions about relationships in heaven matter so much to us.

It's because relationships matter so much to us right now.

And some of the greatest joys we experience in this life come through relationships.

These relationships are gifts from God.

But if we're honest, they are also marked by disappointment.

Even the best marriage has misunderstandings. Even the closest friendships experience hurt. Even the healthiest families carry wounds. And some people carry much deeper pain.

We have broken trust, abandonment, loss and more.

Every relationship in this life is touched by sin and death.

Which means every relationship leaves us longing for something more. And that longing is not an accident.

Because every good relationship was ultimately pointing beyond itself.

Every experience of love was meant to awaken a deeper desire for the One who loves perfectly.

Every experience of belonging was meant to point us to our true home.

Every experience of being known was meant to point us toward the God who knows us completely.

The reason no relationship can fully satisfy us is because no human relationship was ever designed to carry that weight.

Only Jesus can.

In heaven, every disappointment will be redeemed. Every wound will be healed. Every loss will be restored. Every longing will find its fulfillment. Not because we finally get everything we wanted.

But because we finally receive the One we were made for.

The greatest joy of heaven is not that there is no more death. The greatest joy of heaven is not that there is no more pain. The greatest joy of heaven is not even that we will see loved ones again.

The greatest joy of heaven is that we will be with Jesus.

And when we see Him face to face, we will discover that every good thing we loved in this life was only a glimpse of the goodness, beauty, love, and joy that have always been found in Him.

And because He is there...

Death does not get the final word.

Loss does not get the final word.

Grief does not get the final word.

Jesus does.

And for everyone who belongs to Him, that is very good news.