

The God of The Living

Let Us Pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable to you, and for your glory, O Lord, Our Rock and our Redeemer. **Amen**

We come together as a Christian community, as Children of God to celebrate on Sunday because that was the day that Jesus rose from the grave. Each Sunday is a little Easter. This Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of all the saints; in our remembrance of All Saints Day but the reading in our gospel also gives us a glimpse of the reality of the resurrection. It reminds us that our God is the God of the Living not the God of the Dead.

What is the definition of resurrection; In Greek this word means to rise from the dead, to rise from a lower status to a higher one; it also means rising up in a change for the better.

We are Easter people! We believe in the resurrection, but the Sadducee and Pharisees were not as fortunate. They are afraid of Jesus, Jesus has taken over the temple in Jerusalem and the people are listening to him.

Jesus is almost at the end of his journey, he has returned to Jerusalem and his time is limited. In the Gospel of John last week, Jesus was speaking to the Jews, "I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me because there is no place in you for my word."

The Sadducee are elite, rich Jews. They are in charge of the Temple and have been appointed specifically by the Roman Empire to maintain control over the ordinary population. The Sadducee rule using the books of the Torah called the Pentateuch. They are first five books of our bible. There is no mention of resurrection in these books and so they believe that death is the end.

The Pharisees do believe that the body has a soul that carries on after death. They believe in angels, but in their fear of losing control and power they are willing to join the questioning of Jesus with the Sadducee. They hope to show that the idea of resurrection is foolish by sighting a law from Deuteronomy 25; Marriage to the brother in law if the widow is childless in order to carry on the family name. Who would the widows husband be in heaven?

First: Jesus explained the difference between life here and now and life after resurrection. You can no longer die, you are like angels. This is where Jesus gives us a tiny glimpse into what our life after resurrection will be like. It is not like here! It is better! There is no need for marriage and to have some one to take care of you. We are children of God. We will be in the presence of God and therefore all in a relationship to each other.

Second: To further emphasize his point he reminds the Sadducee of the story of Moses and the Burning Bush. Exodus 3:6, God said to Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." God did not say I was He said I am, using the present tense, meaning that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still with him although they had not walked on the earth for many years. They are in the presence of God. He is God of the Living.

AS Jesus always does, he subtly uses what the Sadducee know and with forgiveness teaches them. He teaches us. The Sadducee and the Pharisees were used to judging people by their standards of piety. They felt they were the worthy people because they had money and were held in esteem because of their place in society. If they listened closely to Jesus they would have understood that his kingdom was not here on earth. That worldly possessions and status and relationships would all be erased after the resurrection. The only important thing on their minds would be enjoying being in the presence of God.

Ironically about a week later these men succeed in their plan. A plan that was meant to be. We Know it and so did Jesus.

So today we are here on a day of remembrance, All Saints Day. As Children of a Living, loving God, we are blessed. Some religions don't believe in a resurrected life or they believe that it that it must be earned. They must prove Themselves worthy. I must confess that there are days that I can not see how I could be worthy. Do you sometimes feel unworthy?

Then I realize that when I close my eyes Jesus is there. I breath deep of the Holy Spirit who is always with me and who is with you too. I take the next step and then I take another. I ask God for forgiveness for the sins I know I have committed and the ones I may not be aware of. Then I thank Jesus for the grace I know I did not earn. I often say the Lords Prayer.

It is not about our worthiness or we would all fail, wouldn't we. We are worthy of the resurrection only because of what Jesus did for us. Jesus was and is worthy. Jesus gave his perfect righteousness to us when we were Baptized in his name. He makes us worthy when we receive the body and the blood in his supper. In Jesus name God sees us as worthy, it has nothing to do with good works. By dying on the cross in our place he gave us new hearts and made us worthy for the place we will have in our resurrected life.

Jesus is the Son of God. "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

Do you believe in this? WE are already part of eternal life with the angels, archangels, and the company of heaven. As the bell is rung today for the saints who have passed this year and we remember those who have passed before, remember, none of us are worthy

except for what Jesus did for us once for all. Life here is short but life with God and in his presence will be wonderful. All of us as one , Children of God.

May the peace of God, Which passes all Understanding, keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.
Amen