



# MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church  
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<https://aulc.us>

**TITLE:** Whose Wife?

**SERMON IN A SENTENCE:** The New Testament teaches resurrection—a state that will be at the same time like the life that we know—unlike the life that we know—and more wonderful than we can imagine.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 20:27-38

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 20, verses 27 to 38.

Starting at verse 27:

Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came up and questioned Him:

“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother has a wife, and dies childless, his brother should take the wife and produce offspring for his brother.

Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died without children.

Also the second

and the third took her. In the same way, all seven died and left no children.

Finally, the woman died too.

In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For all seven had married her.”

Jesus told them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are counted worthy to take part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.

For they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are sons of God, since they are sons of the resurrection.

Moses even indicated in the passage about the burning bush that the dead are raised, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

He is not God of the dead but of the living, because all are living to Him.”

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!

-- I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!

When we have a question we like to find an answer that satisfies us, but sometimes we have not grown enough to understand the answer. This happens to adults as well as children.

When you were a toddler you may have been too young to understand why your parents did not want you to go out into the road. You were too young to understand the danger of speeding cars.

Even now you may wonder why your parents choose an early bedtime for you and why they are concerned that you eat good food. You may not fully understand that your parents are trying to provide you with the things that help you grow strong and healthy.

In the Bible we read a story in which the people of that time asked Jesus about what it would be like in heaven. Jesus gave them an answer, but the people of that time and those of us today have not grown enough to understand the answer. He said that those in heaven "...are like angels and are children of God..."

We can think about what it would be like to be an angel, but we really can't understand that fully because we have more growing to do. Jesus tells us that heaven will be different from what we know now. We must trust Jesus, as we would trust a loving father or a loving mother, to know what is best for us. We don't have answers as to what it will be like in heaven. We only know that our needs will be met, we will be happy, and we will be with God.

Do you remember the old Roadrunner cartoons? Wily Coyote always plots to trap the Roadrunner, but he never gets it right. In one scene, he rigs a huge boulder to drop when the Roadrunner trips a wire. Wily Coyote carefully sets the trap. Then we see the Roadrunner moving at bullet-speed along the road. The Roadrunner reaches the trap, which fails to spring, and the Roadrunner goes on his way unharmed—beep, beep!

Wily Coyote, confused that the trap failed, moves in to see what went wrong. Just as he begins his inspection beneath the rock, we see a pebble fall—a precursor of the disaster soon to follow. We see fear in Wily Coyote's eyes. Then the boulder falls and squashes him flat. In the final scene, just as Wily Coyote begins to pull his flattened frame from beneath the rock, the Roadrunner passes through one more time, at blinding speed—beep, beep—and squashes Wily Coyote flat again.

I love those old cartoons. I know that the roadrunner never loses and the coyote never learns, but the swift action always surprises me and makes me laugh.

Jesus' encounters with the Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders of his day, remind me of those old Roadrunner cartoons. The Pharisees and Sadducees hate Jesus. They are comfortable—establishment—and Jesus is a brash young challenger. The Pharisees and Sadducees are always trying to trap Jesus, but Jesus is like the rubber band that always snaps back in their face. Jesus never loses, and his opponents never learn, but I'm always surprised and amused by the action.

In today's story, the Sadducees try to trap Jesus with a question about the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees do NOT believe in resurrection. They believe only in the books of Moses, which do not mention resurrection. Moses is their *only* teacher. They are loyal to Moses. They set out to embarrass Jesus, who does believe in resurrection.

Just as we have seen Wily Coyote set the trip-wire for the Roadrunner, so we also see the Sadducees set the trap for Jesus. They say, "Teacher! You are so wise. You know so much. We would really like your help on this tough issue."

While one of the Sadducees does the talking, the others smile and elbow each other. They wait expectantly for their leader to ask the question that will lead Jesus into their ambush.

The key to understanding their question is that it cannot be answered—unless Jesus is willing to agree with the Sadducees that there is no resurrection.

The Sadducees' question has its roots in an Old Testament law that requires a man whose brother dies childless to marry the brother's widow and to give her children (Deuteronomy chapter 25, verses 5 to 10). That law met two needs:

- First, it helped to perpetuate the deceased man's name.
- Second, it provided for the widow, who otherwise would have been impoverished.

The Sadducees set up a situation where a man died and his brother took the dead brother's wife as his own—in accordance with Jewish law. Then the second brother died, and a third brother took the first brother's wife as his wife. Eventually, each of seven brothers married the woman—and each of them died. Finally the woman died as well.

With that story as background, the Sadducees set the trip-wire. They ask:

"Therefore in the resurrection whose wife...will she be?  
For the seven had her as a wife".

The Sadducees are saying, "O.K. Jesus, you're so smart! You believe in the resurrection! Tell us the answer to that one!" Again, they elbow each other and smirk as they wait for Jesus to walk into the quicksand they have prepared for him.

But while they wait for the answer to come from one direction, Jesus zings it from another direction.

- First, he tells them that life will be different in that heavenly realm. There won't be any marriage there. We won't need marriage to keep the human race alive, because we will no longer die. We won't need to replenish the population. We will become "**children of the resurrection**".
- Then Jesus refers to the story of Moses and the burning bush, a favorite story of every Jew. In that story God says:

**"I am 'the God of Abraham,  
the God of Isaac,  
and the God of Jacob'".**

Jesus says, "Note that God did NOT say 'I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' God did NOT say, 'I USED TO BE the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' God said, 'I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'"

Then Jesus concludes, "If God IS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they must be alive, because God is the God of the living—not the dead. Therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive. They are alive **BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION**" (verse 38 here is paraphrased).

That surprised the Sadducees—stunned them—because they found themselves ensnared in the trap that they had intended for Jesus. But Jesus had answered well, and the Sadducees were afraid to question him further.

We almost expect Jesus to come zipping by from the other direction to flatten the Sadducees again as they pull themselves from beneath the rock that they had earlier set to squash Jesus—but one flattening was all it took to stop these Sadducees.

Some years ago, a young man asked me about this scripture. He was married to a beautiful woman, and he loved her with his whole heart. He said, "If there is no marriage in heaven, I'm not sure that I want to go there." He didn't want to go anywhere without his lovely wife.

Usually, a comment like that stumps me. I might think of an answer, but only days later. But this time, God provided the answer. I said:

"Life will be different in heaven. Our needs will be different. It's like the difference between a six year-old boy and a twenty-six year-old man. When you were six, if someone had told you that, when you grew up, you could kiss a girl, that prospect would not have been appealing—it would have been appalling. The idea of kissing a girl would have seemed disgusting.

"But now everything's different. Your needs are different. Kissing your wife no longer seems yucky.

"In the resurrection, your needs will be different again. You will have joy, but it will be different from the joy that you know here."

I thought that was a good answer. I still do. In the resurrection, we will be different, but we will experience great joy—new joys—joys that go beyond any joys that we have yet experienced.

Some time later, when we discussed this passage in a bible study, someone said, "Well, in the next life, at least we'll be rid of these bodies." I said that we would NOT be rid of our bodies! The resurrection will be the resurrection of our bodies.

Then the questions really flew:

- If we will have our bodies in the next life, how old will we be?
- Will people who live a long time be stuck with old, sick bodies?
- Will the only young people in heaven be those who died young?
- If I have arthritis here, will I have arthritis there?

I have only partial answers to those questions, but I know enough to get us thinking. And we ought to be thinking about the resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is the central event of the Christian faith. His resurrection ushers in the possibility of our resurrection.

In his first letter to the Christians at Corinth, Paul answered those who claimed that there was no resurrection. He said:

"If there is no resurrection of the dead,  
neither has Christ been raised.  
If Christ has NOT been raised,  
then our preaching is in vain,  
and your faith also is in vain...  
If Christ has NOT been raised, your faith is vain;  
you are still in your sins."  
(First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 13, 14 and 17)

But then Paul goes on to say:

"But now Christ HAS been raised from the dead....  
the first fruits of those who are asleep."  
(First Corinthians chapter 15 verse 20).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul talks about baptism as a burial with Christ. At our baptism, we were buried with Christ in the baptismal waters. Then Paul says:

"If we have become united with him  
in the likeness of his death,  
we will also be part of his resurrection" (Romans chapter 6 verse 5).

We will be united with Christ in a resurrection like his. So we must ask, "What was Jesus' resurrection like?"

- For one thing, Jesus' resurrection was forever. He would never die again. Once we are resurrected, we will never die either (Romans chapter 6 verse 9 and First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 42 and 54).
- Second, Jesus had a visible, recognizable body. Jesus appeared to his disciples on several occasions, and they recognized him (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20 to 21, Acts chapter 1 verses 6 to 11,

Acts chapter 9 verses 1 to 22, and First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 5 to 8). We will also have visible, recognizable bodies in the resurrection.

- Third, the resurrected Jesus touched people and ate with them (Matthew chapter 28 verse 9, Luke chapter 24 verses 39 to 42 and John chapter 20 verse 27). In that way, Jesus' body was like ours.
- Fourth, the resurrected Jesus was able to enter a room in which the door was locked (John chapter 20 verse 26.). Jesus' body was able to go through the door. In that way, Jesus' resurrected body was NOT like ours.

That's not all good news, is it! In our bible study, someone said, "I don't want to keep this body forever. I've been looking forward to getting rid of it." I had to say, "Me too!"

- I'd like to be a matinee idol, but I'm not sufficiently handsome.
- I'd like to be a pilot or a race car driver, but my eyesight is bad.
- I'd like to be a great basketball player, but my body lacks coordination.
- I'd like to be a great football hero, but my body lacks courage.

But there's good news here too! In some ways our bodies will be familiar, but in other ways they will be different:

- Paul tells us that our bodies are sown in corruption, but will be raised incorruptible. No more disease. No more heart failure. No more disability. No more decay.
- Paul says that our bodies are sown in dishonor, but will be raised in glory.
- Paul tells us that our bodies are sown in weakness, but will be raised in power. Maybe I will have the coordination to play basketball. Maybe I will have the courage to play football.
- Paul says that our bodies are sown as physical bodies, but will be raised as spiritual bodies (First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 42 to 44). What does that mean? I don't know!

But I believe that God gives us glimpses of things which we will understand only later. For instance, a baby knows its mother better than anything in the world—but a baby does not fully understand motherhood—and won't until she walks the floor with her own baby years later. Just as God gives the baby a mere glimpse of motherhood, so he gives us a mere glimpse of the resurrection. Paul calls the whole thing a mystery—and so it is!

But I do know this:

- I know that Christ was raised from the dead, and that those who believe in him will share that resurrection.
- I know that Christ won the victory over death, and that he invites us to share that victory.
- I know that God has a wonderful life prepared for us—a life that is beyond our ability to understand right now—but a life that will surprise us and fill us with joy when the time is right.

To experience that resurrection, Christ asks only that we follow him—and that we accept him as Lord and Savior. He will take care of everything else.

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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