

Jesus was confronted by a group of Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, and asked Him to consider a story about the seven marriages of one woman and asked who would be married to her in heaven¹. Jesus replied that there would be no such marriages in heaven, and He indicated that relationships there would be on a much, much higher plane, and with much stronger connections. This network would be broad enough to include all in the fellowship. This communion will have no limits, it will be unquenched, it will be free and open, with no personal barriers or conflicts between us. And it doesn't mean that we will not know each other and have our memories!²

The Sadducees were trying to show how ridiculous the resurrection would be, and one can imagine what an awkward social nightmare this could turn out to be – an obviously unworkable situation. There would be struggles for control or ownership or exclusive intimacy, as each man would claim the woman to be his wife, as that was essentially all that they knew at the point in which they died. Consider the flip side of this situation where there are multiple wives of one man, or even various combinations! I have personal experience in this, as I think we all do!

The Sadducees considered that this was their best “contrast” image to illustrate their rejection of a belief in the resurrection. The argument of the Sadducees assumed that the conventions of heaven would be the same as what was experienced in the world, but Jesus knew that this view of the resurrection was not so. When Jesus said that they did not know the power of God, I used to think that He meant about His ability to resurrect us, but now I wonder if perhaps he meant He had the power to transform all souls into a compatible communion³. The idea and level of intimacy⁴ in heaven will be totally different – a cosmic networking among all of God's people that has to do not with breaking “bonds”, but expanding and multiplying the connections between us. It results in a tremendous magnification of these - not a decrease of it.

The Bible also tells of a story somewhat similar to the situation proposed by the Sadducees, when Jesus met the woman at the well⁵. Here was a case where the woman had been married five times, and she was living with a sixth man. The men in her life were likely still part of her community. When she realized that she stood in the presence of the Christ, the Messiah promised by God, she went to spread the news to her village. And many of these Samaritans believed in Christ because of the woman's testimony, and then their faith deepened when they met Christ Himself. Think of how Christ broke down the social barriers⁶ with the result that the people embraced a communion with Him – a transformation that began then and there. This is indeed the power of God, and though it begins now⁷ it extends beyond the communion we experience here into the greater communion that will exist in heaven. This communion works to transform us⁸, and is just a foretaste of things to come in the Kingdom⁹.

No matter what our struggles are with each other¹⁰, we will all be transformed and joined together – intimately integrated into God's family¹¹. I know that I can forgive those whom I know will be transformed. And, of course, I must be transformed, too!

When Christ told the Sadducees that they would “neither marry nor be given in marriage”, I believe that He meant “not given in marriage to each other, but to Christ”, for we will all be married to Him. John, allowed to look into heaven, wrote:

Then the angel said to me,

“Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”

And he added,

“These are the true words of God.”¹²

And this is the true communion of God’s Kingdom, as powered by the precious sacrifice of Christ!

1. Luke 20:27-40
2. Luke 16:19ff (the story of the rich man and Lazarus)
3. Matthew 22:29
4. this intimacy will be much better than what we experience as earthly (e.g., sexual), and very different
5. John 4
6. Ephesians 5:14
10. Our feelings and passions and affections will have been so transformed that we will feel right at home in heaven. Nor does this transforming process have to wait for heaven. Oh, no, it begins now... today. Richard J. Foster
8. Transformation takes place at the Table as we eat and drink the consecrated body and blood of Jesus. A resurrection meal. “Christ in me.” Eugene Peterson
9. Matthew 26:29; “I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
10. [The angel] ... instructed Cornelius to summon Simon, who was called Peter, to his home, an unheard-of intimacy between Jew and Gentile. Richard J. Foster; see Acts 10
11. consider the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church, Ephesians 5:21
12. Revelation 19:9

© Copyright 2023, Heard S. Lowry