

NIV Luke 20:34 Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. 37 But in the account of the 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.' 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Opening Prayer: Lord, be gracious to us, bless us and smile on us so that your Way might be known on earth, your salvation among every nation, tribe, people and language. Use us to make your Way known in our country that we might be glad and sing for joy. May all the countries of the world praise you and fear you, the one eternal Heavenly Father of us all. Amen. (taken from Psalm 67)

Introduction: How many relationships do you have? How are those relationships? Husband wife relationship? Parent –child relationship? Manager-employer relationship? Co-worker-coworker? Neighbor to neighbor? Teacher-student? Friend to friend? And the list could go on and on. Our lives on earth are made up of relationships. Our relationships are a source of the greatest joy in our life and the potential of a grenade explosion of guilt, regret and sorrow. Our Creator and Savior, designed our life on earth to have great relationships. His words today reveal the truth behind our relationships even beyond the grave! Some relationships do last forever!

Looking forward to our Eternal Relationships!

An eternal Gracious God

An eternal Forgiven Family

1. An Eternal Gracious God

Leave it to Jesus to turn an unbelieving trap question meant to discredit him into a glorious statement on God's gracious loving plan. The Sadducees were unbelievers. They did not believe God's faithful and true Word about life after death that he promised through men like Moses and Job. Their unbelieving question went like this: If a woman marries 7 men throughout her life and they all died before she died, who will she be married to in heaven? They wanted to make eternal life sound like child's play. The truth is I agree with the Sadducees that life after death does sound silly and childlike. In fact all of Christianity sounds down right childish. I should talk to an invisible God, who will not talk back to me but promises to hear and help? Babies are saved from eternal death by sprinkling water on their head and saying what amounts to two sentences over their head? A man and woman should spend the rest of their life joined at the hip no matter what? One man paid for the debt of all people so that no sinner needs to pay for even one of his sins before God? We can go on and on about the silly foolishness and childish word of God. None of the bible makes sense unless...unless you believe in Jesus as the Savior of the World your God and your Redeemer.

Before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, Job believed in his redeemer and the life after death his gracious God promised him. **NIV Job 19:23 "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, 24 that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! 25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!**

Through Moses God recorded for us to hear as often as we want that he is the God of the living, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." When God spoke those words Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all long passed through death and into eternal life. *God, our Heavenly Father still had a relationship with them.* Death did

not end our Lord and Savior's relationship with his people. *Our relationship with our eternally gracious God never ends!*

In the NT the apostle Paul states it clearly and boldly,

NIV Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the last revelation of the truth about the afterlife, Jesus Christ promises each and every one of his believers: **NIV Revelation 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

Pastor How can there be life after we die? Have been at the gravesite of a loved one as they lower them into the ground?

Were you there when God turned on the Sun? Were you there when God traced out in the mud the form of a man and then breathed into him an eternal soul? Were you there when God put that man into a deep sleep and took out a rib to begin the creation of the first beautiful woman for man? Were you there when God planned to have you born?

Were you there when God promised Adam and Eve a Savior to crush the serpent's head? Were you there when Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary? Were you there when they nailed him to the tree? Where you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there with Mary Magdalene, when she fell at Jesus feet crying outside the tomb on that first Easter morning? Were you there with the Emmaus disciple's when they realized they just walked a mile with a man who was crucified died and was buried? You weren't? Yet God had you in mind every step of the way through his gracious plan to save you and the world of sinners. God has drawn you with an everlasting love. He always loved you! He created you. He always loved you! He died on the cross for you. He always loved you! He gave you faith to believe His promise of love and forgiveness eternally. He has always had a relationship with you!

2. An eternal Forgiven Family

"Pastor you haven't answered the question about our marriage relationships in heaven? What does it mean that I won't be married to him in heaven? I love him and want to be with him." Relationships are tricky aren't they? They can be so awesome in bringing us much joy and satisfaction. On the other hand they are the source of sorrow, sadness, guilt regret. How's the old saying go, "Can't live with him can't live without him." The key to having satisfying and joyful relationships in your life is to believe God's loving relationship with you. When I read this passage, **"35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.**

My heart aches to think that I will live without that loving relationship we have together today. Sadness begins to well up in my heart. Whenever sadness starts to well up we must trace it back to its source. Is the sadness from selfishness of what I will lose? Then it shows a lack of faith in God's love for me. Or is it a sadness for other's pain or loss and a deep desire to meet the needs of other's, just as God grace jumped into action to meet every one of our needs? God's love for you started before you were born, before you learned to walk, learned to drive, learned to love. Before you dated, before you were married before you had children. And that loving relationship with you does not end with the loss of a limb or the loss of your driver's license or being separated from a loved on in Christ by distance or even death.

The foolishness of Christianity is not just seen in how God saved us but in how his people are to live forgiven as well. God commands his people to "Turn the other cheek." If someone asks for your coat, give him the shirt off your back." "Submit to the governing authorities." "Pray for those who persecute you." Love your enemy." Forgive as I have forgiven you." Love your neighbor as yourself." Give generously. These are words that apply to us all as

Christians, following in the family footsteps of our brother Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father the Creator himself. With our faith firmly planted in God's gracious love for us, we are free to serve, love and satisfy the needs of all the people in our life. How can we do all those things? We believe in God's loving relationship with us no matter what comes our way.

Notice though in God's forgiven family on earth we don't call all Christian women our Christian wives or all Christian men our Christian husbands. We call them Christian sisters and Christian brothers. The marriage relationship is a specific gift given to some of God's forgiven family. God designed Christian marriage for companionship, children and sexual happiness. But God promises that in the life to come the afterlife, we will all be like the angels. We will not have an end to our life and there will be no new beginnings of life either; no more giving birth to children and no more laying bodies to rest in the grave. So there is no more need for a relationship based on giving birth to children and sexual happiness. Instead the afterlife will be filled with companionship, brothers and sisters that are 100% engaged and concerned about others, 100% unselfish, 100% listeners, 100% attentive to the needs of others. Not just one person you can completely trust, completely depend on, but all your Christian family brothers and sisters will be there for you. There will be no more sin, no more guilt, no more shame. There will be no more need to retreat to our castles and hide behind our walls, with just our family our loved ones. WE will all be the forgiven family of God, trusting, caring, loving respecting, honoring and serving our Lord together.

The apostle Paul said the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Believe the words of the one who is faithful and true, the one who has had a relationship with you before you were born and will continue to have a relationship with you after your body is buried:

NIV John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

I can't wait to see my wife and children in heaven. I wonder how different it will be without fear, doubt, guilt, shame or any form of sadness. I wonder how it will be with everyone completely loving and trusting each other. It's hard to fathom. I still look forward to those relationships, of course with my wife and children, But with all of God's people not just a few! Like you I trust God's faithful and true Word. He has promised us a Savior and he made good on his promise. He has promised us a better relationship with all of God's forgiven family. I know he has an eternity of satisfaction, joy and fun for the entire forgiven family. Let's keep looking forward to eternal relationships and make sure we all keep our faith in the one who is faithful and true to His Word Jesus Christ.

NIV Psalm 33:4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. 5 The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.