**Luke 20:27-40 November 10, 2019**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for this morning comes from the Gospel of Luke the 20th chapter here re-reading these words. "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him." This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's been said that in order to know where you're going, you have to know where you've been. Family trees are a great resource for finding out about past relatives and who they are, but the best resources of all, are the relatives themselves for they can tell you what they experienced and how they lived. Sitting down with your parents, your grandparents, or even your great grandparents, and asking them about their parents, and their relatives, is a personal way of finding out about the origins of your family. You can firsthand hear stories about the good times and the bad. About what's changed, and what remains the same. You can hear from your family members, how they were taken care of, and provided for. Family history is so important it has become big business as online resources promise to dig up your family history and shed light on the occupations and lifestyles of your ancestors. You can send in DNA kits that will help you trace by your lineage. You can even track down members of your family you never knew existed. Even in the Bible, we see a great emphasis on tracking families. Just look at the Genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. Look at the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, and the mini genealogies that connect many different Old Testament books, and you will see that families have histories. And those histories, matter. In our Old Testament lesson today, when Moses stands shaking before the Lord, who is present in the burning bush, The Lord reminds him that He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. In the same way, Jesus speaks to the Sadducees and the scribes in our Gospel lesson and reminds them of Moses and the burning bush, stating himself that the Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The same God who took care of those Fathers of the covenant, and who took care of Moses, and Jesus, still takes care of us, today. That same God promises us life everlasting, and a resurrection from the dead. But do we always believe His words as our relatives did? Or do we instead turn to ourselves and our own reason, in this modern day and age?

Our Gospel lesson presents us with a group that did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They were a group that turned from the words of their relatives and the promises that they believed. This group was known, as the Sadducees. The Sadducees were coming to Jesus in order to test him. Many times when we look at Scripture, we falsely assume that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were groups of Jewish religious leaders that believed the same thing. The truth is very different. The Pharisees were a group of Jewish leaders who believed in a strict following of the commandments of God. For them they believed that salvation could be attained by achieving a personal level of holiness by their own following of the Law. That of course meant that the Pharisees were always “moving the goal posts” so to speak, they could excuse away any breaking of the Law that they did, but never excused anyone else’s actions. The Sadducees, as it is specifically stated by Luke here in Luke 20, denied that there was any kind of resurrection of the dead. They came to Jesus with the same intentions of the Pharisees where they had tested Jesus with a question concerning the payment of taxes. The Sadducee's come to Jesus with a question regarding the resurrection and marriage. The scribes later are whom Jesus responds to, at the end of Luke 20, when He speaks about the question of if the Christ is David's Son. All 3 groups come to Jesus in order to trap him with their intellect and knowledge, even with their specific knowledge of the Scriptures. For them, they relied upon their own false understanding, and their own reason rather than trusting in God.

These groups doubted the promises of God in His Word, and instead questioned God based upon the conclusions of their own reason. And how many of us do the same thing today? How often have we turned to our own understanding rather than trusting in the Lord and His promises? The Sadducee's present Jesus with a question regarding whose wife a woman will be, who has remarried 7 times. It couldn't possibly make sense that she would be the wife of 7 men in heaven. Their reason led them to questioning if there was even a resurrection at all. And it's no different for us in our lives. How many times have we looked at something revealed to us in Scripture, and dismissed it because it is something that we do not understand? How many times have we leaned upon how we feel, and how smart we are, instead of looking to God's Word as the sole authority in our lives? We are no different from the Pharisees, the Sadducee's and the scribes who came to Jesus, to test him. What they really were doing was setting up ultimatum's for Jesus. They were saying "Unless you can agree with me, from what I have decided in my mind and from my own reason, I will never believe" And we do the exact same thing. We set up for God, ultimatum's in our lives. "God, if you don't give me this job, I'll stop believing in you." "God, if you don't take away this pain, I'm not going to Church anymore." We put ourselves in front of God and His promises, we rely upon our own reason and our own strength rather than that of our Heavenly Father. And we are surrounded, especially in our society today, with intellectuals and scientists who assure us that it is literally impossible for the claims of the Bible to be true. We are told that our reason and logic have evolved to a higher place in our advanced age, and we know better than our relatives did. And this only adds fuel to the fire, tempting us to turn our backs on the promises of God, just as the Sadducee's did. The fact is, when we rely upon our own reason rather than God's revealed Word, we create an idol of ourselves. We believe that we know better than God. But the truth is, all we know is sin. And when we've separated ourselves from God, and rejected His promises of life everlasting, we've chosen only one thing for ourselves, and that's eternal death.

But look back upon the lives of our relatives and our ancestors, and you will see a history of God's care and compassion. Of God's promises and forgiveness. And truly, you will see God's love for His people. Moses stood before the Lord and questioned Him if He was the right man to go and do this task, and the Lord assured Him and said "I will be with you." God did not abandon Moses. God promised to be with Abraham, when Abraham left his homeland and journeyed to the land that God told him. God took care of Isaac when He spared Isaac's life and blessed Isaac with a faithful wife. God took care of Jacob, when Jacob was on the run from his brother Esau by showing him a vision of the angels in heaven. God did not abandon Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob. In the same way God has not abandoned us today, but has promised to be with us and take care of us.

Jesus heard the questions and the doubts of the Sadducee's and he did not attempt to answer every tiny and specific detail of their questions. But He knew the intentions of their hearts, and instead pointed them to the truth of the resurrection. Christ assured them of the life everlasting that their relatives were experiencing. Jesus pointed them not to the worries and problems that are experienced during our lives on earth, but instead He pointed them to the glory that awaits all believers in the life that is to come. Christ specifically says to the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes, who rely upon their own understanding, that they worship a God who is not a God of death, but instead, a God of the living. A God of life, and a God who took care of their relatives. A God who watched over those in the past, and a God who is watching over them now. Jesus assured them that they do not worship a God of death, but a God of life, because they are in that moment, looking at the one who is willingly going to the cross in order to win for them eternal life with Him forever. They are looking at the one who willingly gave His life and suffered and died to save them from their sins. They are looking at the one, who is going to fulfill the covenant that was passed down from Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. They are looking at the one who makes the impossible, possible and turns their own reason into foolishness, for their own sake, by His mighty Word.

And we look at the same Jesus today. The same Jesus who was pierced and died for our sin. The same Jesus who gives himself in His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins here in His house today in Holy Communion. We partake of the same body and blood as our relatives did, and share in the community of the saints here in the Divine Service, where we join with "angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven" glorifying God's name and praising him. We do not need to doubt God's promises, because we are strengthened the same way our relatives were, and just as God was with them in the past, He is still with us today.

Our doubts and fears are dispelled by the truth of God's Word, that tells us authoritatively in Luke chapter 1, "Nothing is impossible with God." We rely upon God's Word that is living and inspired, that is not outdated or out of place in our world, but instead humbles us and tells us that we are but God's children. We rely completely upon the wisdom of God as it says in Proverbs 3 "trust in the Lord, with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

In order to know where we are going, we have to know where we've been. And the truth is in the history of the human race, we have been to some very dark places. We have rebelled against God and given him ultimatum's in order for us to believe, and we still do today. Yet, God has humbled us by His Word. He has promised to be with us and to forgive us when we sin against Him. And we can look at the past, and see how God has loved and cared for our relatives and taken care of them. Especially we can remember that He still takes care of them today, and has given them the joys of eternal life with Him forever. May God keep us in His understanding as we look to the resurrection of the dead. Never forget that all who live eternally, live to God for He is the God of the living.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.