

1Corinthians 19-01-20a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is Sunday the 20th of January 2019. We're privileged on this brisk morning to assemble and to share in the fellowship and study of God's Word that we enjoy whether near or far.

You can be turning to 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and we are rapidly approaching the close of this study which if memory serves has taken us right at two years. But we've had a few, is the portal of hiatus, hiati, we've had hiati, hiatuses, interruptions a few times along the way. But we are on the threshold of chapter 16 and we have seen in chapter 15 the very extensive treatment of the subject of resurrection.

We've reviewed who rises when and where, where they come from and where they go. We have one final passage that we're going to look at in brief to round out that study and then we will begin this morning at chapter 16. Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study.

Father, we are so thankful for the many ways that you express your grace and your faithfulness toward us. We are so limited in our comprehension and in our reach and our grasp in this earthly plane and we live and walk by faith knowing that you have seen the end from the beginning. You've woven us into the fabric of your plan.

You have delivered us from our inherent corruption and our sinful nature through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have forgiven our sins. You have granted us new life and the presence and power of your Spirit and the opportunity to learn and prepare ourselves for ages to come through learning and applying the truth of your Word.

That is our endeavor this morning and we ask your blessing on us as we undertake it. May your Holy Spirit find each of our hearts pliable and teachable and minister the truth of your Word to our souls in a way that will edify and will draw us closer together and closer to you through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name.

Amen. Well, as I said, we have one final thing to look at in connection with resurrection. Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 has declared it to be part of the essentials of the gospel, the essentials of the faith, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried, verse 4, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

And he goes on to make an extended case that the resurrection of Christ guarantees our resurrection. They follow. If there is no resurrection of Christ, there is no resurrection for us.

But because He has been raised from the dead, in verse 20, He is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in the same way that death and sin entered into our world and into the human race by the first Adam. The last Adam is a life-giving spirit, and it is through Him that that problem of death is overcome. You always hear this argument, the people who especially

are not interested in salvation and want to criticize Christianity, and they say your view is so uncharitable and so unfair.

God is unfair because if Adam sinned, why am I automatically guilty? Well, because Christ died, you can be automatically free of that guilt. In the same way that I had no participation in what was accomplished in the garden in the fall, I also have no participation in what was accomplished on the cross with the propitiation being made for sin. I can simply choose.

Do I want to remain under my initial and inherent condemnation, or would I like to opt out? Would I like to opt into life and place my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior, as the way to the Father, as the way to the future, as the way to eternal life? And so it is eminently fair. It would certainly seem unfair if God simply consigned us to the lake of fire with no way out for something that we had no control over, something we were born into, like condemning a child for a congenital defect. Not the child's fault.

Why would you hold them accountable? Well, we are not held accountable for our sinfulness. We're not held accountable for our corruption. What are we held accountable for? The decision we make about whether or not to accept the gracious and loving work of Christ on our behalf.

Will we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God so that He can exalt us in due time after this life or not? That is the basis of the judgment at every one of the resurrections. Whether you are in the resurrection of the righteous, whether you are in the resurrection of the New Testament saints at the rapture, depends entirely on what you have decided about God's plan of salvation. In the Old Testament, many of the details of that plan, including the person and specific work of the Lord Jesus Christ, were not known.

They were foreshadowed. It was more fulsome in the days of Israel through the ritual shadows that anyone who wanted to contemplate and pursue it could find out that there was going to be a propitiatory sacrifice greater than those of animals, beyond those that were a part of the Levitical offerings, that God would ultimately, once and for all, solve this problem by a greater and more perfect sacrifice. But what about before the law? What about all of the days between Adam and Eve exiting the garden and birthing their sons and daughters and Abraham? There were centuries there.

Methuselah lived almost a millennium. He was 31 years shy of the millennium mark. He wouldn't want to be candles on his birthday cake, 969 candles.

We tried that once with my dad. I can't remember if he was in his late 60s or around 70, but we tried putting all of the candles on the cake, not really contemplating the physics of that and the fact that if you light that many candles, they tend to create this huge updraft and all of the flames join into one. The candles immediately melt.

The entire top of the cake will catch fire. The smoke alarms will come on. Trust me when I tell you there's a point at which you want to start using the... When I was in school, they had little

cardboard men.

You have the ones man, you have the tens man, and you have the hundreds man, and they each have ten fingers. And that's how they taught us decimal mathematics was, okay, well, the tens man has got one finger up, so that's ten. The ones man has got six, so that's 16.

Well, you got to start using tens candles. Make them a little fatter if you want, but after I'd say probably your mid-30s, that's about as many candles as you want to risk. Just take it from me.

But this notion of long life prior to the flood, what did these people understand about when they did eventually die? There was some knowledge of sacrifice. We see that as far back as Cain and Abel making sacrifice, but how much did they actually know? What was the promise of ultimate redemption and ultimate resurrection? As Paul has detailed it so clearly for us, that information certainly didn't make it into Genesis. So what was the criteria for being written into the book of life, so to speak? It was trust in God that he had the problem in hand and faith in him, however much revelation he provided, trusting in that.

As Hebrews 11.6 says, you come to God by believing that he is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him. And so you become a diligent seeker. And however much God chooses to honor that seeking, you gratefully and humbly accept that and let him figure it out.

I've often said in this whole debate about, is there eternal security? Can you lose your salvation? What about those who have never heard and all the rest of it? There is only one person that I ultimately can do anything about in terms of salvation, and that's me. And is there a line you can cross and lose your salvation? I don't think so, but I wouldn't die for that. My goal is to be so far away from that line that for me, it has no pertinence.

It's like hassling out the finer points of the uniform code of military justice or the American legal system. How much do you have to go? How far do you have to go? How many appeals do you get before you have the death penalty? Well, that may be of some mild interest, but I'm so far away from that, it's not pertinent. So as we come to this close of the section on resurrection, there is a final passage that we'll take a quick look at that was brought up last time in connection with resurrection, because it was a point that was brought up to the Lord Jesus by the Sadducees.

And of course, not believing in resurrection, they are sad, you see? And this is evidently an important piece of dialogue, an important exchange, because it is recorded in three of the four Gospels. Turn back to Luke chapter 20. The accounts are extremely similar, and you can basically follow it in Matthew, Mark, or Luke for convenience.

Luke is the closest as we turn back from Corinthians, but it is also in Matthew chapter 22 and in Mark chapter 12. In Luke chapter 20, beginning at verse 27, some of the Sadducees who deny that there is a resurrection came to Him and asked Him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take

his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now, there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died without children, and the second took her as wife, and he died childless.

Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also. And of course, you can see the care with which you need to treat the literality of because he doesn't say in like manner the other four also, does he? When they are speaking here, and they say in like manner the seven, they basically mean all seven similarly. But of course, the first one isn't similar because he's the original husband, right? So there are times to press what is literally in the verse and times to recognize that things are figures of speech, they are ideas, suggestions, and you don't press them.

Wouldn't this be a mistake to say the second took her as wife and he died childless, then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also. So what are there, actually nine brothers? You see what I'm saying? When it says in like manner the seven also, it just says all seven were married to her. And in like manner has to be understood in its context.

They left no children and died. Last of all, the woman died also, verse 33, therefore in the resurrection, this is our subject, in the resurrection whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife. And of course, now the context make this abundantly clear what it means when it says in like manner the seven also.

So all seven had her as wife, Jesus answered. And we're going to look at Jesus' answer because He is talking about what things are like in the resurrection. And we're fascinated by this brief glimpse from someone who has been there, someone who knows and is authoritative.

Jesus answered in verse 34 and said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Then He makes a separate point in verses 37 and 38.

But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised when He called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him. And you will notice that this is such a resoundingly solid point that even Jesus' opponents and skeptics say, Teacher, you have spoken well.

And after that they dared not question Him anymore. You would love in a debate or contention to make your point so completely and establish it so well that the opposition basically has nothing left to say. Well, there are two parts of Jesus' answer because there are really two parts to the question.

In the resurrection, whose wife does she become? Why are they asking this question? Do they have a genuine concern about how are we going to sort spouses in the resurrection? Is that their real question? What is their real question? In fact, what is their real argument? There can

be no resurrection because if there were, this is the kind of unsolvable problem you would have. And because I see an unsolvable implication, because I see an insurmountable difficulty with the circumstance that would arise from your view, your view can't be right. There can't be a resurrection or you have all of these people trying to figure out who belongs to whom and so on.

So Jesus is going to answer in two ways as well. In the first case, He says, the sons of this age. The very first part of His reply is, the sons of this age.

Why does He start this way? The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. We're in the context of Israel. He's not talking about Philistines or Egyptians or anybody else.

We are in the context of Israel and we are in the context of the law of Moses. These are the sons. The sons of this age are the sons of Israel in the age of Israel, right? That's the context.

It's really important. I made this point to somebody in the last few days with whom I was having a discussion that if you are going to say that a command applies to a community, you better figure out who that community is and who it isn't. So who are the sons of this age that Jesus is talking about? They are the sons of the covenant.

They are the sons of the age where God is interacting with mankind in and through Israel, right? So any conclusions that we're going to take at first blush from this passage are for whom? Is He talking about the church here? Is He talking about our age? Who is He talking to? Who is He talking about? What is the group sons of this age? Who is it? Old Testament Israel, right? You have got to establish your definitions. If you're going to use symbols, if you are going to use pieces in your argument, you've got to know what they are and what they are not. Now I'm not saying that this has no pertinence for us, but what does Jesus say? The sons of this age.

What would all of the listeners immediately conclude about that group? Well, that's us. That's we Israelites. We who are quoting Moses because he is the definition of what goes for us, right? So the sons of this age are people under the law of Moses, in covenant with God.

That's what this is talking about. So Jesus defines his terms, so to speak, right at the beginning. The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

Now, again, in what group and in what context and what kind of society are women given in marriage? We have sort of a throwback tradition, who giveth this woman? And we say giveth because we're harking back to old timey things and it's got a biblical ring to it and so on. There's nothing in Scripture that says the, it doesn't even describe weddings in Scripture, really. You have wedding feasts, but you don't have a wedding ceremony described in Scripture, do you? Who's got the ring? Who giveth this woman? I do and her mother and I do and all of this other stuff.

It's all invention. It isn't scriptural. Giving in marriage, what did that mean biblically? In Israel, a family headed by a father would give, if the father was dead, it would be the senior brother.

Remember this in the case of, you can go back to Rebecca, you can go back to Laban with Leah and Rachel and the father is in view and if not the father, then the oldest, whoever's the head of the house, he grants permission. He gives the woman out of his purview and into the purview of the groom, the new husband. So the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage and of course sons here means children because you've got both men and women in view.

Men aren't given in marriage in this culture. Women are given. So the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, the children of this age, the children of Israel.

But those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead. Now again, what was the group we started with? Children of this age. Those who are counted worthy to attain that age, i.e. the resurrection age, where are they coming from now? Is this a different group? Is it the same group? Or is it a subset of that group? Sons of this age marry, given in marriage.

That's down here on earth, everybody understands. Those who are counted worthy to attain that age. This is a subset of those, right? Not everybody who is a son of this age marrying and giving in marriage is going to be counted worthy to attain that age.

Those who are counted worthy and Jesus prods the Sadducees just a little bit with this concept of worthiness. They're talking about everybody's coming back and Jesus says there is a worthiness criteria. There is some qualification for the resurrection.

Somebody's in charge. Somebody is having the sheep pass under the rod and some are going in and some are not in terms of attaining that age. That age and the resurrection from the dead, those who are counted worthy, neither marry nor are given in marriage.

They neither marry nor are given in marriage. It doesn't say they aren't married. It doesn't say they don't go there and continue an association that was established by a marriage in this age, does it? It says there are no new marriages and there are no new givings in marriage in that age, right? I'm just pointing out what he says and what he does not say.

He doesn't say in that age nobody is married. He says in that age no one marries or is given in marriage. Now, what is the function of marriage in this specified group, this specified age, the sons of this age? What is the function of marriage? Turn with me to Numbers chapter 25.

Let me check and be sure I've gone where I want to go. No, that isn't it. It's Deuteronomy chapter 25.

Beginning at verse 5, Deuteronomy 25.5. This is the Levirate Law that is under discussion by the Sadducees. Deuteronomy 25.5. If brothers dwell together and if one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother shall go into her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

It shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. If the man does not want to take his brother's wife, there is a whole ritual that is performed, a ceremony that is performed, and he ends up being called in Israel the house of him who had his sandal removed. Notice in verse 10, his name shall be called in Israel the house of him missing a shoe.

And you remember this over in Ruth chapter 4, the kinsman redeemer, because the husband's brother, brother means kinsman, as it does frequently in Old Testament scriptures. But notice, brothers dwell together, one of them dies and has no son. The widow goes and is taken by the husband's brother.

The husband's brother shall go into her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And what is the goal? Offspring. Why offspring? Perpetuity.

Maintaining possession of inheritance. Maintaining the name and the inheritance in Israel, right? That's the sons of this age. How do you inherit in Israel? As a son of the Israelite age, how do you have a name and an inheritance? You marry and you perpetuate.

This is your family, this is your clan, this is your tribe, this is your people. And your identity, your name and your inheritance, your perpetuation, your extension of life as it were, your name is going to be remembered, and your line is going to represent you when you are gone, is accomplished by marriage and offspring. So, that's the function of marriage in Israel.

Marrying and giving in marriage creates new generations to carry God's covenant, to possess what He provides, and to carry on His name as their names are perpetuated, right? That's what it's for. So what does Jesus answer the Sadducees? You err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God. The sons of this age enter into marriage, specifically in Israel, for a reason.

And what is that reason? It's stated here. The firstborn son succeeds to the name of the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. That his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

Blotted out is a fascinating word study. What does it mean to be blotted out? Well, we'll take a look at that in a moment, but let me push through for the conclusion of Jesus' first point. I went on a rabbit trail on blotted out, and I'm going to share some of that with you, because it's really interesting.

But let's follow logically Jesus' point to the Sadducees. Sons of this age, marriage and giving in marriage is a means to an end. And it is the perpetuation of name and inheritance.

Those who are worthy to attain that age, their name and their inheritance is established in a different way. You don't get it from your father. You're not perpetuating human inheritance.

The criteria for a name and the criteria for inheritance in that age doesn't depend on marriage. So there is no marriage or giving in marriage there because you've got an eternal inheritance

and you have an everlasting name that has already been determined. You don't need this mechanism to perpetuate it, to determine it, or to extend it.

So the mechanism and the purpose of marriage in Israel doesn't pertain there. Now this isn't a blinding insight, but think about this. What is Jesus really answering here? That your name not be blotted out in that age doesn't depend on marriage in this age.

It depends on did you become worthy in this age to attain that age? You see? So Jesus says to them, these who are considered worthy to attain neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore. Why was there the need for this lever at marriage? The first brother died. What is the requirement for the Sadducees story to hold any water at all? They marry and they die.

They marry and they die. They marry and they die. Jesus says, not only does name and inheritance not depend on marriage in the coming age, but nobody dies.

So you're trying to take a paradigm of this age and extend it into that one and talk about consequences when it's a completely different kind of age. Now look at this. You really have to watch here.

Nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. What was the purpose of the levirate brother coming in and taking the widow? What's supposed to happen? A son. They're supposed to be offspring, right? That's the whole reason that it continues six more times up in the Sadducees fairy story here is that there's no son.

There's no issue. It didn't work. And so it has to be tried again and again until each of the brothers has tried to raise up a son.

Jesus says, they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Sons of the resurrection are sons of God. God determines the inheritance.

God assigns a portion. God gives you a name. Isn't one of the overcomer blessings for church age believers a new name? I just hope mine is not something that I wish was a little more noble.

Hey, squirrely. Hey, unpredictable, but a new name. They are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Now, in the middle of this, who are they equal to? The angels, right? Turn over to Acts chapter, chapter, and I apologize. I'm having to look around a little bit. I've had another, you know, typical Windows update in the middle of what I'm trying to do.

We're in the vicinity of chapter 22, Acts chapter 22. And then chapter 23, it's 23 verse 8. You remember Paul gets dragged before the Sanhedrin, and they're all calling him a heretic. And

then he says, I'm here because of the resurrection.

Verse 6, 23, 6 of Acts, when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am being judged. Because, of course, he was preaching Jesus and Anastasis, which the Greeks thought was a female God and a consort to Iesus, Iesus and Anastasis, but he was preaching the resurrection.

The resurrection was always a part of Paul's gospel presentation. And he says, I'm preaching the resurrection, and that's why I'm on trial here. Now look at verse 8, verse 7. When he said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and what else? No angel and no spirit. Now what did Jesus include here when he says in the resurrection that they are sons of God and sons of the resurrection, and who are they like? They are equal to the angels, which the Sadducees don't believe in. Not only do they not believe in resurrection, they don't believe in angels.

And he purposely includes they are like the angels. They are equal to the angels. So they get a twofer here.

They get a double Bible class, because not only is there a resurrection, but there are angels in the presence of God. And of course, they can't come up with a story that will seemingly create difficulties for the existence of angels. They can only do it for the resurrection.

But if they're wrong about the resurrection, Jesus says, guess what else you're wrong about? These sons of the resurrection that really do exist are equal to the angels that really do exist. And if you're paying attention, you need to go back and study your scriptures. How did they get this? Who's the angel of the Lord if he's not an angel? How did Moses get the law? What does it say in Hebrews? Delivered by angels.

This law of Moses you're quoting and this piece that you're relying on, those are messengers of God that deliver this. And how you can be a Sadducee and have any kind of recognition of the authority of Old Testament scripture beats me. But I find this fascinating.

The Sadducees not only say there's no resurrection, but there's no angels and no spirits. And so Jesus challenges them to rethink their suppositions. Many times we take for granted suppositions that are not necessarily proven.

And rather than arguing conclusions, we need to go back and examine assumptions. And if the assumptions are wrong, you're not going to get anywhere with your conclusions. Go back and establish the validity of your assumptions.

So in looking at this, let me just say the following. We do learn a lot by observing Israel and things in Israel. But you know that in this age and in this time, marriage is on a different basis.

And you don't have a section as you have in Ephesians about husbands love your wives. And the love aspect is largely hidden in the Old Testament law that deals with marriages. It is a mechanical and a practical matter for establishing and securing space and name and inheritance in Israel.

Space and name and inheritance in the church age is on an entirely different basis. Marriage now is closely associated with the relationship between Christ and His church. Well, does the church which is His body and the two becoming one flesh have an association? Old Testament and new? Of course.

But in the same way that the church has a different purpose than Israel, marriage between believers in the church has a different purpose. It is designed to illustrate and to reflect the nature of the love that Christ has for the church and that we as believers have for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is love that is expressed.

Now, there was a disconnect between the function of marriage and the purpose of marriage under the and in the resurrection, right? Because in the resurrection, the shadows are replaced with reality. Christ and the church is the reality. Does the Lord Jesus have a relationship with us now where we love because He first loved us? Greater love hath no man than to lay down His life for us.

The love of Christ constrains us. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We have a completely different basis for marriage now.

And if you look at the association between Christ and the church and marriage in this age, what exists now in terms of the love of God for us through Christ, the love the Lord Jesus Christ has for us, it exists now and it is also going to exist in the resurrection, which is a different resurrection than the one being contemplated here, right? We have our own resurrection, but you can't draw conclusions about, well, we're married here as believers in the church age, but are we just going to be walking around like the angels and nobody knows anybody any different or any better than one another? You can't say that because the paradigm is completely different. The function of marriage in the Old Testament served a purpose and it showed death. It showed the need for offspring and it brought death to the fore.

That's what Jesus points out. That's what the Sadducees point out. The whole story depends on death.

In the New Testament, marriage serves a completely different function. We learn about the love of God for us. We learn about the love of God for children through fathers and mothers loving and nurturing their children.

There is a completely different message being taught and it's the real message and it persists. So I would suggest to you that marriage for believers in this age is as persistent as love that Christ has for the church and that we have for Christ. Marriage in this age reflects the love of

Christ, and the love of Christ doesn't run out of gas and have no purpose in the future.

It is even more fulsome and even more fulfilled in the age which is to come. So Jesus talking to Sadducees in the Old Testament age about the Old Testament purpose, nature, and function of marriage does not say anything about the persistence of our marriages from now into the eternal future. Being like the angels, what are the angels like? Equal to the angels.

What does it mean? What is the name and what is the function and what is the type of possession that angels have? What is it based on? Did they inherit it? How do angels get assigned their rank as a cherub or a seraph or a messenger angel or a guardian angel or a warrior angel or any one of the other numerable functions that we see? Did they inherit it or was it assigned? Do we know anything about angels giving birth to angels? Why does he say like the angels? Because angels have their assignment and their names given by God, assigned by God directly. It's not a function of who's your daddy. That's how they are like the angels.

It doesn't mean that angels don't associate. We don't know the nature of angel relationships. I see them functioning in pairs quite frequently in the Old Testament.

But the like the angels is specifically in the context of how did you get your name? How did you get your function? How did you acquire your capabilities and your area of responsibility and your opportunity to serve and function? Angels have that assigned directly by God based on something and that's what we will have. We will be like the angels. Those who are sons of the resurrection in Israel are also not going to be subject to what daddy did.

You remember the good and bad kings that alternated in Judah? You got Hezekiah and then you've got a complete awful reprobate right after. You've got Josiah and then you have somebody terrible afterward. Well, in the resurrection, you're not having your teeth set on edge because your father ate bitter grapes.

In the resurrection, God assigns name and function. And that name being blotted out is a really important concept. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll take a quick look at that. Then we're going to turn our attention to 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and the collection for the saints.