Questions of life and death

Luke 20.27-38

The Sadducees ask Jesus about the resurrection – which they do not believe in. They tell an exaggerated story to make their case. In response, Jesus dismisses their story, looking forwards to a different kind of life for the children of the resurrection, and back to God's revelation to Moses as proof that those who die are alive in God.

Now read **Luke Luke 20.27-38** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Throughout this chapter, Jesus has been making himself unpopular with the authorities. The Sadducees were not expecting him to answer their absurd question. How undermined they must have felt when, from their introduction, he uses their own Scriptures to question their dearly-held beliefs about life after death.

Pray

Use the five questioning words – Who, What, Why, Where and When – as a framework for your prayers. Write them on a sheet of paper and add notes for what you feel led to pray for under each heading. Use it each day during the week, and see if your prayers develop, change or become focussed on particular issues. Are there ways that you can be part of the answer to your own prayers by making responses which start with Me/I, This, Because, Here, Now?

You need a card (postcard size) with a large question mark on it. Have fun over a meal, or on a journey, passing the symbol around and inviting each person who receives it to ask one question starting with Who, What, Why, Where or When. The more obscure the question the more fun you can have making up answers!

WATCH

Watch a TV Quiz Show – there are plenty to choose from! Are there any you don't bother to watch because they are too hard? Or too easy/silly? Think of two different people you know and make up a short quiz for each of them. Do you use the same questions for both, or do they differ according to what you think they will know? Try the quizzes out when you next meet them!

PLAY

There is a hymn that asks, 'When was it that we first forgot that questions helped us grow?'. Look at the 'games' section of the National Geographic website (https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/games/puzzles). Play one of the games, tackle one of the puzzles, or do one of the quizzes. There are choices that suit working alone and together. Did you learn anything? Was it fun? Think about or discuss together how you might make learning more about God fun too.

What is happening here? Are you sure?
Do we ask similar questions of our faith?

Questions

On your own or with others, make a list of types of questions – e.g. 'trick', 'impossible', 'easy'. You will find there are many in common use! Think about what, for you, makes a question 'good'. Perhaps it is one that doesn't have an answer but sparks another question or a conversation? Read the Gospel passages again, with its 'trick question'. What is a 'good question' that you'd like to ask Jesus?

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Questions of life and death Luke 20.27-38

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

There was a group of wealthy religious people called the Sadducees. They didn't believe in life after death. And they liked to laugh at people who did believe in it, or ask them tricky question to make them look silly when they answered. One day, some Sadducees came to Jesus with a question. It was almost a riddle. They said, 'According to the Law, if a man's brother dies, the man must marry the brother's wife and look after her children.' This was all true.

The Sadducees carried on: 'There were seven brothers. The first one died, leaving his wife behind, but no children. The second brother had to marry her, as the Law says, but he died too, again without children. The wife was married to all seven brothers in this way. But all the brothers died and none of them had children. 'Who,' the Sadducees asked, 'would the woman be married to in the life after death?' They thought Jesus would sound very silly indeed when he tried to answer this riddle.

But Jesus had an answer. He said, 'People of this age marry. But people who are worthy of life after death will not marry. They will no longer be able to die, but will be like angels and are children of God.'

Jesus knew that the Sadducees really liked Moses, so he said, 'Even Moses showed that the dead rise, because God says to him in the story of the burning bush, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.'

Luke 20.27-38

Luke 20.27-38 (NRSV)

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.'

Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.'

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