



Wednesday Prayer

22nd Sunday after Pentecost – No longer a possession

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 anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. Luke 20:27-36

A first reading of this Gospel left me wondering how this applies in today's world, and to the issue of keeping children safe from sexual exploitation. Then I read a [commentary](#) by Emerson Powery, Professor of Biblical Studies at Messiah College, Grantham, PA. He asserts, "In the patriarchal culture of the ancient world, it would strike few as odd that these men debate *the ownership of this woman* in the afterlife: "whose wife will the woman be"?"

Last week we honored those who have died, and raised up the hope of eternal blessings for those who had endured suffering and abuse, especially those who had been trafficked or exploited. Yet in this passage, some wish to keep this woman a possession for eternity. Jesus responds by describing the woman (and others) "like angels, children of God, children of the resurrection." Attachments and ownership go away, and relationships may be free to expand.

How does our current worldview impact how we're raising young people to view each other as equals, with no "ownership" of the other? We are in a time of cultural shifting. We have the power to speak up and speak out for equality, an equality that can lead to healthy relationships that don't exploit another. I encourage you to read and study in community the ELCA's most recently adopted social statement [Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action](#).

God of life, help us to work for an equitable life for all. Help us to reflect on the ways we have contributed to harm and injustice, whether through our thoughts, actions, or our inaction. Lead us to use the gifts you have given us to change systems and change our own behaviors, engaging in the work so that all people may thrive. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.