



**2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Psalm 17:1-9;
Luke 20:27-38
Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (November 9, 2025)**

In today's gospel, the Sadducees asked Jesus a question, trying to trap him. We might wonder: Was Jesus wearied by them? Did he laugh out loud? The absurdity of their question is a function of their rationalism taken to an extreme. They didn't believe in the resurrection, so, why ask the question? Their goal wasn't to establish to whom one is married in heaven – and so Jesus doesn't answer that! They aim to expose the absurdity of belief in the resurrection – a belief that we need to acknowledge is based on faith.¹

Whom are you going to meet in heaven? What if you were married more than once? What if you meet up with your obnoxious brother, your annoying sister, your contentious business partner or your exasperating rival? What will you do if you spot your hypercritical mother or uncaring father in the crowd? Who is to limit God's healing mercy, God's abundant generosity to forgive and welcome all: the sinner, the sick, the broken?

In other words, how do you imagine heaven to look like? Will it be like the wedding feast Jesus was talking about or do you imagine you will play golf every day? Or as Tammy Faye Bakker put it as she was

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:14

nearing death, “I think of heaven as a giant shopping mall where I have a credit card with no limit!”?

And what about those who have been abused here on earth? Will they finally have justice restored to them? Will there be apocalyptic retribution to correct the wrongs experienced in this life? Will the corrupt, the violent, the sadist, the trickster, the tyrant, the liar, the cruel meet their fate?

Will the belly of the hungry be filled? Will the dignity of the poor be restored? Will the homeless refugees find a welcoming place and the unjustly incarcerated freedom? Will the discriminated against be seen as a human being and the ignored be finally heard?

Granted that there is no perfect justice on earth, should the followers of Jesus ignore the cry of the poor and defer them to the perfect justice of heaven? Isn't that convenient? For whom? Can true disciples pretend not to see and hear what is going on in the world? Can we be satisfied with simply sit back and give a hand out, or do we start asking our own questions about socio-economic justice, environmental conservation and protection, and legal equity?

As the well-known proverb says, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” This wisdom reminds us that providing the tools and knowledge for self-sufficiency is far more empowering and enduring than offering temporary solutions.

Yet, what if in addition to teaching self-sufficiency we inquire about what caused the fish to die or disappear, who polluted the waters, who allows the polluters to be unregulated, who over-fished and who allowed them, who controls the cost of fishing, and so on? Is it possible, wise and desirable to advocate for and envision a better

world, perhaps a world that reflects the values of heaven? Would that be the “already and not yet” reality that Jesus talks about?² Is that the kingdom for which we pray in the “Our Father”?

Following Jesus as his “*disciples*” and not simply as church “*members*” means that we learn to see the world as he sees it, that we associate with the people he associates with, that we become aware, expose and condemn the banality of evil, the weakness of violence and the cruelty of injustice.³

Thoughts of heaven and resurrection do not encourage us to postpone justice or compassion for some future time or distant place, but to live in integrity and coherence with the values of the kingdom in the present moment. In striving for a more just and loving world, we are invited to cultivate the peace of heaven here and now, becoming instruments of healing and reconciliation wherever we are.

Thus, we need to ask ourselves:

- What are the values of the kingdom in us that we need to explore and develop?
- What energy in us needs to be channeled and let flow?
- What are the passions that need to be shared for our own spiritual flourishing?
- What resources can we contribute to the establishment of the kingdom?
- What soul mourning can we access that calls us to become sensitive to the plight of the afflicted?

² Luke 11:2; John 18:36

³ [The philosophy of violence: Hannah Arendt and the banality of brutality - AOAV](#); [Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Terrifying Theory of Stupidity](#)

- What world suffering is calling for our compassion to be manifested and inviting us to offer solidarity?

Christianity cannot be limited to reading inspirational books, or listening to excellent sermons, or reciting powerful prayers, or attending ecstatic worship. Christianity is about practicing the faith; it's about embodying the Word; it's about making Jesus' message real for the hopeless, the forgotten, the dismissed. It's about trusting the "Image of God" in us, the character of God in us, and following it. It's about seeing the Light in us and finding ways to give space to that Light.

When we look at the life of Jesus, we learn that the kingdom of God is about feeding the masses and not taking away the food; it's about healing wounds and not opening new ones; it's about building community and not creating exclusions. Questions arise that are well explored in the Bible:

- Will the Lord listen to the prayer that comes from lying lips?⁴
- Will the Lord not listen to the cry of the poor?⁵
- Will the Creator of the Universe not notice the destruction of the planet?⁶
- Will the Lord ignore suffering and bless the path of the violent?⁷

May the Lord have mercy on us and allow us to become mature human beings and mature Christians. May we be transformed by God's lovingkindness and filled with God's Spirit. May our hearts know compassion, and may our eyes be moist with the suffering of those who struggle. Amen.

⁴ Proverbs 11:3; 12:22-28; 19:5; 21:6; Psalm 34:13; 141: 3; Zechariah 8:16; 1 Peter 2:1; Colossians 3:9; James 1:26; Revelation 21:8; 22:15

⁵ Psalm 34:17-18, Psalm 9:18, and Proverbs 21:13

⁶ Genesis 1-2; Psalm 24:1; Romans 8:19-22

⁷ Psalm 11:5, Proverbs 3:31-32, and Isaiah 1:15-17