

Jesus on the Status of Women

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Introduction

Today, we turn our attention to a curious encounter in the Gospel of Luke—a conversation between Jesus and the Sadducees. They came to test Him with what seemed like a clever question. A woman, they said, had been married to seven brothers — one after another — and each one died. “So, in the resurrection,” they asked, “whose wife will she be?” Now, they weren’t really seeking the truth. They didn’t even believe in the resurrection. They only wanted to trap Jesus. But Jesus, as always, turns their trap into truth, revealing something powerful about the value of women and the equality of all people in God’s kingdom.

1. Jesus Exposes Old Thinking

The Sadducees' story says more about *them* than about God. To them, this woman was not a person —she was property. She had no voice, no choice, no name. She was “given in marriage,” and therefore, “taken in marriage,” by someone as property, and passed from one man to another. That was the world's way then — and, sadly, it can still be the world's way now. But Jesus refuses to accept that way of thinking. He does not argue about whose wife she'll be. Instead, He says: “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage.” What does that mean? It means that in God's new creation, no one *belongs* to anyone else —because we all belong to *God*. That was — and still is — a revolutionary message.

2. Jesus Reveals a New Reality

Jesus shifts the conversation from *ownership* to *relationship*. He says that those who share in the resurrection “are like angels and are children of God. “Like angels! Not bound by human systems, not defined by status or gender, but alive in the presence of God. In that age, the age of resurrection life, there is no hierarchy — no first or second class — only sons and daughters standing equally before their Father in heaven. So,

when Jesus speaks of the woman who had seven husbands, He is not condemning her — He is *freeing* her. He is declaring that in the kingdom of God, she is no longer a passive possession but a beloved child of the living God.

3. Luke’s Gospel — The “Women’s Gospel”

Luke’s Gospel repeatedly shows this lesson. Women are given priority over men. Luke’s Gospel aims to free everyone who is oppressed—the poor, the marginalized, women, and outcasts. Women play a vital role in every story found in Luke’s Gospel. When the angel came to Mary, *she believed* —while Zechariah, the priest, doubted. In the temple, both Simeon *and* Anna recognized baby Jesus as the Messiah. A sinful woman washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and taught Simon the Pharisee a lesson in love and humility. A poor widow gave her last two coins, while the rich scribes devoured her home. And when Jesus died, it was the women who stayed, and it was the women who were first to proclaim, “*He is risen!*” From beginning to end, Luke’s Jesus lifts women from the shadows into

the light. He shows that God’s kingdom has no outsiders — for all are made in God’s image and all are welcome at His table.

4. The God of the Living

Then Jesus finishes His answer by saying: “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive.” And He reminds them of the burning bush —how God said, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” If God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then surely He is also the God of *Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel!* The same God who called Moses also called his sister Miriam. The same God who blessed Abraham also blessed Sarah. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead raises *all* who trust in Him — men and women alike. God’s relationship does not end with death, and it is not limited by gender or status. Our God is a God of life — a God of equality —a God whose love never ends.

5. What This Means for Us Today

So what does this mean for us, the Church of today? It means that the kingdom Jesus proclaimed is a kingdom of *equity and inclusion*. A

kingdom where no one is silenced, and no one is forgotten. In Christ, women are not “given” to men — they are *given to God*. In Christ, men are not masters — they are *servants and brothers*. And in Christ, *every* human being bears the image of God, and must be treated with the dignity that image deserves. Dear friends, must never mirror the Sadducees’ world —where power decides worth. Instead, we must mirror the kingdom of God —where grace and love define all relationships.

6. Conclusion

The Sadducees came to Jesus with a question about life *after* death. But Jesus answered with a truth about life *before* death —about how we are called to live *now*. He invites us to live as children of the resurrection — men and women walking side by side, each bearing God’s image, each reflecting God’s glory, each alive to His love. So let us honor one another, speak for the voiceless, lift up the lowly, and build a community where all are seen, valued, and loved. Because, as Jesus said, “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living —for to Him, *all are alive*.” **Amen.**