

## Thursday, January 26, 2017 - Day 25 – Exodus 13-15; Psalm 21; Matt 22

In the 22nd Chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew we see the Pharisees and the Sadducees attempting to trick Jesus, to test him. The Sadducees were the priests and the elite class of Judaism at the time and were religiously very conservative. In Acts 23:8 we are told that "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels, nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all."

Although the Sadducees give the hypothetical question to Jesus to try to trick Him, He uses the example of Moses who is both an authority figure and example that they revered to turn the question back onto them.

Our God is not a God of the dead but of the living. Jesus comes with the promise of always being a part of God, with God. Our God is a redeemer and a transformative God. God calls us to love each other in a similar way. The resurrection isn't about death, but new life. How many of us have experienced resurrection in our lives or the lives of loved ones? Who has not fallen into what the Psalms frequently call the pit – our lowest point? It may be the throws of an addiction; the loss of a beloved one; a loss of a job, or income; or a lost sense of stability. But from those low points- from being "in the pits"- we have been raised up through our faith in Christ Jesus. Sometimes we continue to fall and through the love of Christ we are raised up once again. Often we are raised up repeatedly.

We have been through a very tumultuous presidential election and as of this writing President-elect Trump has not yet taken office. By the time it is published he will have been sworn in and will have begun to govern. We have seen how the country has been divided and how things that some thought were ugly vestiges of the past have resurfaced or been uncovered. We are people of the resurrection. We are, as the Presiding Bishop says, the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

As people of the resurrection we must not only know that the resurrection is our promise as Christians, but also an attitude that we must live into. We must see the resurrection as our outlook on life and allow it to influence our decisions and the difficulties we encounter in our lives. When we die to our worst impulses and even our overpowering sense of hopelessness in our lives, we can rise to new heights with our resurrection outlook of a new life in the love of God. We must embrace the Gospel vision of loving our neighbor as ourselves; caring for those that some see as the least of these to become sons and daughters of that resurrection. We are most certainly all of God's children.

As Christians our duty is to God first. We must, as Jesus says, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." We are always living as children of the Kingdom living under the occupation of the empire. At some periods in history and different areas of the globe it has been more evident than at others.

Rabbi Hillel who lived at the same time as Jesus said, "That which is despicable to you, do not do to your fellow, this is the whole Torah, and the rest is commentary, go and learn it."

Jesus tells us "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

As resurrection people, as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement we must remember that the resurrection is our promise, our hope, and should be our outlook. That resurrection is for us both as individuals and for us collectively as children of God. We will rise above that which is troubling, difficult, and evil.

We must remember that like the old Hebrew National hotdog ad said, "We answer to a higher authority"

By The Rev. Phillip Geliebter