

To Be Like the Angels
Matthew 22:29-33

November 4, 2018

29 Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

All Saints Day is a Christian celebration where we honor all the saints from Christian history. The festival stems from a conviction that there is a spiritual connection between those in heaven and those on earth. We take time to remember and honor those who have passed on. We express gratitude for the lives and deaths of the saints. All Saints Day also reminds us that we are connected as Christians. Who is a saint? It is those who follow Jesus and trust in the salvation of Christ. 1st Corinthians 1:2 teaches that those who are sanctified in Christ are called to be saints.

Did you know that Halloween comes from Old English? The word "hallow " means holy. Over time Hallows' Eve became Halloween. So, Halloween is the evening of holy persons as it refers to the evening before All Saints Day. When the Roman Empire persecuted Christians there were many martyrs that died for their faith. The church set aside special days to honor them and people prepared for the celebration with a night of vigil on Hallows' Eve.

The title of the message today is sounds exciting "To Be Like the Angels." First I think it is important to understand what is an angel. Many in contemporary society assume that when you die you go to heaven and become an angel. Well, that is not the case. The Bible does not tell us that we will be changed into angels. What the Bible tells us is that angels are a different creation. In the Bible an angel's most typical role is as a messenger of God. In fact, the word "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek means messenger. In the Bible angels are referred to as holy ones Zechariah, watchers in Daniel, and the host of heaven in Deuteronomy. An angel is not a person, or a spirit, or a ghost, or dead.

So the, what are angels? What we know about angels comes from the Bible. Angles are very numerous; there are thousands and thousands of angels. When they appear to humans they us a human form so they are not immediately recognized as angels. Often they appear in extraordinary beauty. As a medium of God's power they provide a benefit to humans. They exist to execute the will of God. They appear to individuals or the whole nation. They announce events, both good or bad, that affect humans. They bring the word of God to the people through prophets. Specifically in Bible they predict advent, minister to Jesus after his temptation and agony, declare his resurrection and ascension, and now act as ministering spirits to the people of God.

In today's Scripture Jesus said "they will be like angels." That is the people that have passed will be like angels. They will not be angels. They will be like angels. Let's look at what's going on in Matthew chapter 22. There is a conspiracy to trap Jesus. As Jesus is speaking he is explaining what heaven is like. The king invites many but they don't come. While Jesus is talking about heaven some Sadducees challenge him. "If a man dies childless, his brother will marry the widow and raise children for his brother. So, there are seven brothers, the first married and died childless leaving the widow to his brother, the second did the same and so did the third on down to the seventh. The question is this. In the resurrection whose wife of the seven will the widow be?" Jesus response is that the very foundation of your premise is wrong because you do

not know the scriptures and you do not know the power of God. Jesus is in your face. You are guilty of fallacious reasoning. It is the fallacy of a questionable premise, the conclusion is wrong because the premise is wrong. Jesus is saying "you do not have a clue. You don't know what you're talking about. You do not know the scriptures and you do not know the power of God. They are not given in marriage. They are like angels.

Jesus, with keen knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, astonished the crowds.

They were trying to trap Jesus by publicly presenting him with a no win situation. Jesus surpasses them in wisdom and proves to be beyond their ability to trap. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." The righteous live on forever like angels in heaven. The error of thinking by the Sadducees is in thinking of heaven in terms of the earth and thinking of eternity in terms of time. The question is irrelevant because heaven is not simply a continuation of this world. There are new things and greater things that will transcend the physical.

The contemporary lesson for us is our response to this fantastic good news. This is the best case scenario. A fact of life that we hate is that we all are going to die. A fact of life that we hate is that we miss our departed loved one. But God gives us hope. Jesus teaches us about the hope that God gives us. Jesus brings to us the hope that God offers. Heaven is a place where all are invited but few are chosen. The reason few are chosen is because they fail to respond to the invitation. Heaven is a place for the saints. The righteous live on forever like angels in heaven. This is a reason to celebrate. We pray to God. We express our thanksgiving. God prepares a celebration. God invites you to participate. God wants you in fellowship and in worship. God invites us all. The saints that have departed are like the angels as you and I are to be like the angels.