



Marriage After Death

Lesson Overview

1. Online Video

Watch *What Heaven Feels Like* (1min 51sec) at www.bitly.com/HeavenFeelsLike.

2. Discuss

The joys of heaven; the joys of marriage.

3. Read

Marriage continues after death. Some do not believe this, in part because Jesus makes a confusing statement about it. pp. 1-2

4. Discuss

The implications of the idea that marriage is eternal. p.2

New Church Concept Finding a Partner

Those who in the world have lived unmarried but have desired marriage, and still more with those who have solicited it without success, if they are spiritual, are provided blessed marriages in heaven. People who have lived in monasteries, if they desire a conjugal life, obtain it; if not, they are conveyed to those who live in celibacy at the side of heaven. *Conjugal Love* 54

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 20 | Conjugal Love

Introduce the video *What Heaven Feels Like*

1. What does heaven *feel* like?
2. How does one angel's joy affect others?

Let's look at what the Writings say about heavenly joy. Show the video *What Heaven Feels Like* (1min 51sec) at bitly.com/HeavenFeelsLike. (Enter the bitly link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. What struck you in the video?
2. Which is more powerful—one person's joy, or the joy of a whole heaven?
3. When you go to a wedding you may have noticed how happy a bride and groom look on their special day. How does their happiness affect everyone who is there? A wedding reception—with food, music, and dancing—is a way of expressing the joy of marriage. Since marriages continue after death, friends hope and pray that the happiness of a marriage will last to eternity

Read

Many people have been confused by Jesus' words from Mark 12:25, "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage...." In fact, many marriage ceremonies end with the words "until death do us part." Some people have thought that there is something spiritually unhealthy about sexuality and that in the next life people are not masculine or feminine.

When married partners love each other tenderly, they think of eternity in regard to the marriage covenant, and not at all of its being terminated by death. *Conjugal Love* 216:4

The New Church teaches what many couples instinctively feel when they fall in love: marriage lasts forever. When New Church couples exchange vows they do so with the hope of *eternal* marriage. After death, people who truly love each other meet again and live in heaven as married partners. The Writings teach, "People who are in marriage love, love to think and will each as the other, and so to become like one person. The image and likeness of one is in the mind of the other, and they live together in all things of love even to the inmost. People who live together like this on earth live together as angels after death" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2732).

The Writings tell us how Jesus' words from Mark 12 fit in with the concept of eternal marriage. These words were spoken a group of Sadducees, who did not believe in life after death. The Writings explain "When a person does not believe he will live after death, he also disbelieves that there is anything spiritual.... People like this live a life of the body and of the world" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1201). We picture marriage love as love between two people, but on a deeper level it involves our "marriage" with the Lord—learning about Him, loving Him and doing His will. Without this love, a person's life is selfish and empty, and that person is not part of the kingdom of heaven. People like this "neither marry or nor are given in marriage." Only people who work on the heavenly marriage of good and truth inside themselves while alive on earth may bring this marriage into heaven after death.

Not all marriages last—and some people die before they are old enough to marry, or do not find a partner with whom they have a lasting relationship on earth. People who lead good lives but do not find an eternal partner in this world are led to an eternal partner after death. Swedenborg described married partners meeting again after death and also couples meeting for the first time, falling in love and being married in beautiful wedding ceremonies in heaven (see *Conjugal Love* 45-54).

Discuss

1. How might believing that marriage ends with death or that marriage can last to eternity affect the ways in which married partners treat each other?
2. What did the Lord mean when He said, "when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage...." Imagine you are talking to someone who has been taught that it is literally true.
3. A person you are dating believes there is no marriage after death. What might you tell him or her?

Sadducees

The Sadducees were Jews living in New Testament times who restricted authority to a literal interpretation of the written law and were not open to change. They hated the traditions of the Pharisees. The Sadducees denied the resurrection after death. Acts 23:6-8 records how this issue divided the Sanhedrin (Israel's religious governing body), because the Pharisees believed in the resurrection and the immortality of the soul. Matthew 22:23 and Acts 4:1-2 also refer to the Sadducees in this way. It is probably because the resurrection was so critical for Christianity that the New Testament focuses on this point. The doctrine of the resurrection is hinted at in the earlier Old Testament, but clearly taught in Daniel. The Sadducees, who emphasized the Law of Moses, did not put much stock in Daniel because it is apocalyptic. The Sadducees focused on the status quo of the nation of Israel in this world and not the next. <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-sadducees>

Married couples meet after death, recognize each other, renew their association and for some time live together. This happens in their first state, while they are concerned with outward matters as in the world. When in this state, neither of them knows the inclination of the one to the other, this being concealed; but afterwards, when they come into their internal state, the inclination manifests itself, and if this is concordant, they continue their conjugal life, but if discordant, they dissolve it. If a man has had several wives, he conjoins himself with them in turn while in the external state; but when he enters the internal state, in which he perceives the nature of the inclinations of his love, he either takes one or leaves them all.... The like happens with a woman who has had several husbands.... But successively, as come into their internals, they perceive the nature of the love and inclination which they had for each other, and whether they can live together or not. That if they can live together they remain married partners; but if they cannot they separate, sometimes the man from the wife, sometimes the wife from the man, and sometimes each from the other. Then a suitable wife is given to the man, and a suitable husband to the woman. The reason is, because no other married partners can be received into heaven and remain there save those who are inwardly united or can be united as into a one; for there, two partners are not called two but one angel. *Conjugal Love* 47-50