

In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. The lily pads are a brilliant green color with soft edges that sit just above the surface of the water. And there are a few small frogs for every lily pad; frogs that are not shy and enjoy the chorus of song they are able to create. This is very good because Tommy and his friends like to come down to the lake and listen to the frogs singing. Every day, the beautiful green patch doubles in size, altering the shade of green just a bit, making the lake look more like a field of green than water covered by a patch of lily pads. Some of the small frogs jump to other lily pads maintaining a nice balance across the lake. Tommy and his friends enjoy watching the frogs hop from lily pad to lily pad. While coming down daily to watch the frogs, they noticed how quickly the lake was filling up with lily pads and the frogs each kind of got their own rooms... It took 48 days for the patch of lily pads to cover the entire lake, and it took only 36 days for the frogs to be separated so there was only one frog on each lily pad. When looking over this small lake, it seemed such a beautiful picture of occupied pads with small patches of green breaking the monotony of the sighting. In contemplating the scene, Tommy asked one of his friends How many days it took for the lily pad patch to cover only half the lake. You are that friend, can you answer his question?

One thing about stories - particularly stories that ask questions at the end - is that sometimes there is information that is not necessary in answering our questions, information that confuses us because it is simply not relevant.

We often get stuck in too many details of something and then completely miss the point or the purpose or the meaning. The same thing happens in this reading from the gospel of Luke. The Sadducees try to trip Jesus up regarding resurrection by using many details associated with the Mosaic law on marriage. They create this ridiculous scenario about one woman and seven brothers. They use the law regarding who this woman would belong to as each brother passes; and then, after she has been the wife of each of the seven brothers, they want to know what happens when she passes. To the Sadducee, eternity lies in the offspring, in the children, not in some other world. So where is the "eternity" for this seven times widow who had no children?

They were not asking Jesus to be the judge of the seven brothers who might claim this widow; after all, they did not believe in a resurrection. "For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit..." (Acts 23:8), "...Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him..." (Matthew 22:23, Mark 12:18, Luke 20:27) what they were really trying to do was make fun of, make a mockery of, the idea of the resurrection.

Jesus' response was basically telling them that they were getting lost in too many details and were completely missing the point of eternity. It is important to remember that the Sadducees believed only in the first five books of the bible - what is known as the Pentateuch - which were written by Moses. Jesus really threw them for a loop when he stated that even Moses knew about life after death. "And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the

dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.” (Luke 20: 37-38) Moses didn’t say that God USED to be God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... Jesus is telling these members of the upper echelons that God is the God of the living, not the dead. Jesus is telling them that God does not welcome into his home those that no longer exist...

This woman doesn’t belong to any of the seven brothers, first of all because “those who are considered worthy of a place in that age (*not the age we currently live in, but the next*) and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.” (Luke 20:35). And second because none of them have died - they have all moved into eternal life... Verse 36: “Indeed they cannot die anymore...” So the details about marriage that the Sadducees offered were unnecessary. And the whole idea of who belongs where or to whom upon death is just a bad question... Jesus lets us all know by way of his exchange with the Sadducees, that there is no death, there is only eternal life. Jesus did not say, “they will not die,” he says “they cannot die”

These men tried to confuse Jesus by using details that really weren’t relevant to resurrection. Just like I tried to confuse you about the doubling in size of the lily pad patch by details of their coloring and the frogs - not relevant... By the way - the answer to how many days it took the lily pad patch to cover half the lake was 47 - if the lily pad patch doubled in size every day and the lake was fully covered on day 48, it would have been half covered on day 47...

Don’t let yourself get confused by details that are simply not relevant. Our belief in the one true God, in his mercy, his grace, and his promise of everlasting life... those are the relevant details for us. Our belief allows us to know, with confidence, that the Spirit lives in each of us.

And because the Spirit lives, we don’t have to worry about what happens or who we belong to after we die. When we stumble over questions of how our world here on earth folds into the next world, the world we enter when our earthly bodies can no longer sustain us, our answer is quite simple. The answer is in the Spirit that lives in us. With this Spirit that lives in each of us, we can, with great faith, know who it is that is watching over us, who it is that is with us wherever we go - and I mean both physically and emotionally - and who it is that is holding us in the palm of His hand.

The Spirit of the Lord that lives in each of us invites us to value things, value life in a different way than we might otherwise... It invites us to hope and pray unreservedly for each new life that enters our world, that the babies can come to know and love the Spirit of the Lord that lives inside of each of them. We are invited to truly live for reasons found in Romans 14: “For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.” (Romans 14:8) And when we die to the Lord, we live forever because in the Lord there is no death, only life... You see, it’s all in the relevant details... AMEN