

this happens seven times — whose wife is she in heaven?

You see, what they really want is to get Jesus to declare that the Pharisees are outside the circle of true believers. Which is what tribal religion always does. It makes faith into an exam of true or false questions about beliefs and texts. And those who don't pass the exam become the unredeemed — the faithless others.

Jesus is not about to get sucked into that ancient and harmful game. He says to them: Look, first of all, the woman in your hypothetical does not belong to any of the brothers, as if she is property who can be inherited. She is a child of God, who belongs first, and foremost, and finally to God.

And second, he says to them, what happens after death is up to God. But this God of the living and the dead, and this faith of Abraham and Moses, does hold us responsible for how we live today. For God is a God of the living. So, instead of asking about marriage in heaven, Jesus says to them, why aren't you asking about what our faith calls us to do now to participate in God's healing of the world?

So, what will we do now? You and I, here. Now in a time of a rising tide of religious extremism across the globe. Now in a time when religion is tearing apart the human fabric in this land and everywhere. Now in a time when cultural conflict, political power and victory, war and terrorism, have become for so many people a matter of religious vindication?

Is it not more important now than ever that we commit to being a people who transcend religious tribalism and seek new ways to live what is most generous and gracious and compassionate in our faith?

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Now as perhaps never before, don't we



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