

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

SERMON: Job 19:22-27**A REDEEMER FOR YOU EVEN BEYOND DEATH!***Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh?**Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever!**For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.**How my heart yearns within me!*

Happy Easter, and why are you here today? Is it a traditional spring festival? A festival of spring's new life? A time for new baby chicks to be born, baby rabbits, fawns, and above all calves from your cows? A time for the trees to bud and green out, the tulips to grow and to blossom, and grass as dry as it is, to struggle to green out and to grow? I think you get, that Easter is more than that. It's about Jesus and His resurrection. But what is it about Jesus and His resurrection? Is Easter a celebration that Jesus won, that Jesus, for all the grief He took, came out on top—like the hero in any good book or show or movie—dragged through the dirt, but in the end king on the mountain? Well, Easter certainly is that—Jesus' victory. But it's even bigger than that. It's joy and it's new life even and especially for you.

Do you feel like the story character or movie man, getting dragged through the dirt of life, but never getting to the top. Sigh, life has many setbacks. There's unwanted and dreaded sickness, there's undesirable weather—indeed lack of rain--there's upheaval in our culture, unrest and polarization within the nation. You need somehow to get through all this and come out on top, don't you?

In our text Job, an Old Testament man, was flailing. Life had been going smoothly for him. He was a child of God, a believer, much blessed. How blessed?? I think you can identify with this. He had 500 yoke of oxen. I assume 500 pair of oxen—which was not just a measure of wealth in terms of head of cattle, but also a measure of “tractor power” of the day. He had 500 female donkeys—plus male donkeys and colts, I'm sure. Again it was not just a measure of head of livestock, but donkeys were beasts used for transporting local goods—a measure of hauling capability—how many pick-ups did he own? He had 7000 sheep—think of the wool for sale! He had 3000 camels—for over-the-road, long-distance travel through the desert. Semi's you could say. Think of the number of servants he had to care for all this bounty! He also had grown children—7 sons and 3 daughters. A dear wife. But at the devil's instigation, Job got dragged into and through the dirt, suffering roughly. God allowed Satan to afflict and drag him down. In one day, all was lost--flocks, herds, servants, children. Then later his robust health and frame were beset with painful boils, festering sores. His wife had no encouragement for him—“Curse God, and die.” Three dear friends came to console him, but all they could say was, “Somehow, it's all your fault, Job. You've done wrong, or else all this wouldn't happen. Repent!”

Do you find yourself in Job's shoes? Maybe not in his size? Your personal property is under siege or wearing out, health giving way, friends turning against you? Talk about friends turning against you! Right now we are all aware of a great friend that quickly turns into a bad enemy. A friend that allows your trucks, tractors, cars to run; your firearms to fire, your homes to be warm. But it can destroy ALL in a few moments. Fire! Honestly you're in the same shoes that Job was. You may live ever so godly a life devoted to your Creator and Preserver, you may do the absolutely best you can in the way you carry out your life and treat others, devoted to God and to family and neighbors, whether friends or not. Yet still you are a sinner, someone that doesn't hit the mark, or hit the target every time as God expects. You are someone weighed on God's balances and found wanting. Someone who has tip-toed, or stepped, or run, or bull-dozed your way across God's forbidden line with Satan dangling the carrot and bait out there in front of you. You haven't loved God and loved one another, as He wants. You may not have committed any heinous sins, but you're under siege, like Job. Job needed Easter and so do you and I.

In our text, Job was not happy. He was dissatisfied with his friends and their insistence that this was his own fault, that he had done bad things to bring this upon Himself. Many times that is the case, isn't it? You make foolish ungodly decisions and you suffer for them later. However, Job was even unhappy with God. He felt God was being unfair to him, picking on him, trapping him in a net, surrounding him with a fence, uprooting him like a tree. Job always respected God. He never cursed God--to hell with You, God-- but he felt God was not treating him right. Nor were his friends. How do you feel today? Do you need Easter? Indeed!

From deep within his heart, Job cried out, *Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever!* He had something to say that was the Truth, no matter what things looked like or seemed like on the outside, in the midst of all his woe--- *I know that my Redeemer lives.* Although no action was being taken, no help, no defense was at hand, he knew he had a Redeemer! What was a redeemer? The Old Testament word was go-EHL. A go-ehl, or a redeemer, was a rescuer who came to one's aid and paid the price. If an Israelite had to sell his land to pay a debt, he always had the right for it to be redeemed. Someone could come to his aid with the money, pay the debt for him, and thus retrieve the property. The same was true if an Israelite had to sell himself into slavery to a fellow Jew. Someone could come to his aid and pay the price for him, undo the slavery, and give him back his freedom. Job was confident he had such a helper who in the end would defend and rescue him, from all his woe. His Redeemer was not powerless, was not without strength. My Redeemer LIVES. He is alive and shall stand when all this has passed away. He shall come and STAND on this earth, on this dust. He shall STAND in charge. He shall go forth in charge. He will make all things right again. Job was expressing his trust in the promised Seed of Abraham in whom all the families of this sinful earth would be blessed. Job was expressing his trust in the Seed promised in Eden after Adam and Eve's fall into sin, the Seed of the woman who would crush Satan and all evil. Job said in confidence, My REDEEMER lives!

The text is talking about the risen Jesus, isn't it! The promised Son of God who carries the day. At the end, He will stand on this earth and be in charge. Himself was put to death, but He stood alive at the tomb on Easter morning resurrected, and in charge. Did Job know about the future resurrection of Jesus? King David did. In Psalm 16, *You will not leave my soul in Sheol* [Hades, the realm of the dead], *nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.* And David was not talking about himself. In the New Testament Peter clearly points out that David was dead and still buried. David was talking about the Resurrection of Christ, his and Job's and Peter's Redeemer. Even Adam understood the Resurrection of the Promised Rescuer-to-Come, for the Lord had promised that the Seed of the woman would bruise and crush Satan's head and power. Adam knew the punishment for sin was death, and to break death the promised one would have to overcome death itself. He would die and rise again! Adam knew it. In fact there after the fall into sin Adam named his wife "Eve"—the mother of all living! Adam and Eve had just sinned, and now there would be death for them and all their children. But Adam named his wife Eve---Life! In her Seed, the one to break Satan's power and to break death, there would be, and is, LIFE for all.

That's right where Job was! *After my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.* Job knew he would rise again! Because of his Redeemer, Job would LIVE, to see the Lord. Even if all would completely unravel for Job and he would die in shame and un-glory, though his skin, his flesh, would be destroyed in the grave; yet he in his flesh would see God, with his eyes. Job did not just think of a spiritual resurrection, that the spirit lives on but the body never again. Job knew that his body would rise and he would stand Redeemed, forgiven, glorified, honored, before God Himself.

That's where you are today! That's why you say, Happy Easter, or Blessed Easter, or Blessed Day of Resurrection! In spite of all the dirt you're being dragged through in life right now in 2021, in spite of your own failings, and lackluster, death-deserving deeds before God, your Redeemer lives! He rose from the grave 2000 years ago. He grants forgiveness for all your trespasses and sins, because He paid the debt. He is your righteousness before God. He has won it for you. He carries you even through death itself when your flesh and the flesh of your loved ones is destroyed, eaten by worms, becoming dust and ashes again. Yet He will raise you! with glorified bodies never to die again. You will see Him in your flesh, with your eyes. Your Redeemer. That is the joy and glory of Easter, the Day of Christ's Resurrection. You are saved and you are safe from Satan and every foe.

How my heart yearns within me! How Job's "insides" languished and ached for that great day to come. Every day as heart-aches come and go, big and little, you can patiently remember the Resurrection of your Redeemer and that in Him you will be set free and no longer victimized by anyone or anything. You are safe and blessed in your Savior's hands. Job eventually learned that God was NOT against him. Job eventually learned simply to trust Him. The same for you. Trust Him. God blessed Job again, with 7 sons and 3 daughters, and more earthly possessions than he had before. But Job's confidence was in His living REDEEMER!

Be at peace. Your Redeemer lives! He loves you. YOU LIVE! Now and at the Great Resurrection! Blessed Easter!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach----