

SERMON FOR EASTER SUNDAY 2023

TEXT: JOB 19: 23-26

THEME: I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES!

“Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!**25**

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, **27** whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

In the name of Jesus!

Last year Luann and I had the grandkids over for a sleepover. Everyone was tucked in bed, fast asleep, and Luann and I, confident that everyone was asleep, went to bed to get a good night's rest. About three in the morning, I felt this little hand rubbing my face. I looked over and Declan had crawled into bed with us, and was sleeping soundly between Luann and me. I rolled over to go back to sleep, and the little fella did it again, rubbing the palm of his little hand across my cheek. In talking about this with Rachel and Charles, I found out that Declan usually did this. He would crawl into their beds and rub

their cheeks when they were asleep. He did this because he wanted the assurance that someone he loved was physically present by him and close by him in the darkness of the night, so that he could rest securely.

Job was all about trying to have some security in his life. This Lenten season we have been going through the book of Job, seeking to understand what the Lord has to say to us in times of our trials and tribulations. We saw, early on in the sermons, that Job was a blessed man, a man who lived securely, he possessed much in his life and was physically blessed by the Lord with livestock, family, and fortune. But then, calamity struck Job, or should I say, Satan struck out at Job, attacking Job's possessions and then Job himself.

Job knew all about the insecurity that comes with the darkness. Today in our text we find Job on a God forsaken ash heap. He sits there with a shaved head and sores all over his body. His ten children died when a tornado struck his home and obliterated his property. Raiders from neighboring lands ransacked his property, they took all of his animals and killed all of Job's servants. Job, who was once considered the greatest man in the east, was now reduced to a pitiful, ghastly sight, seeking relief from his suffering by scraping his sores with some broken pieces of pottery. Job needed some relief, he was seeking relief, but Job found no relief in his suffering.

Now on this Easter Sunday, we shout the glorious news that Christ has risen! He has risen indeed! We join in a joyful voice as we sing, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." And when we look at our text for today, Job 19: 25, we see Job singing the same hymn; "I Know That My Redeemer Lives!" But what does that even mean? It means that we aren't immune or insulated from life's tragedies, it also means that we aren't intimidated by them either! It means that we have Someone who is with us always, even when we are going through dark and troubling times, we have a Redeemer with skin on! And just listen to what Job has to tell us!

Job first tells us that I KNOW. Here Job is living his worst nightmare. He says : "What I feared has come upon me, what I dreaded has happened to me." But Job doesn't say, "I kinda think, or I suppose, or I sure would like it if, or knock on wood, maybe..." Job says none of these things. Although he has been severely tested and assaulted, he is not defeated. Although he has lost much of what had been valuable to him, he still has what is most precious. He may be down, but he isn't out for the count!

Job dares to say, "I KNOW." Job dares to confess, "**I know.**" There are a lot of things we don't know. We don't know why we had to bury the love of our life. We don't know why that child turned against us. We don't know why we

lost that job. And many times we don't know what God is doing. But instead of living in whimpering sadness, and letting the giants consume us, with Job, we dare to say, **"I know!"**

"I know" ... what? **"I know that my Redeemer."** Job doesn't say, "His Redeemer. Her Redeemer. Their Redeemer. Or your Redeemer." No. It's personal and particular. It's intimate and individual. It's, "My Redeemer."

In the Old Testament a redeemer was a close relative—someone with skin on!—who would rescue, ransom, recover, or redeem anyone who had been, or was in danger of, being removed from the family by poverty, war, death, or a poor economy. So, for instance, if someone had fallen into debt and had sold himself into slavery in order to pay back debts, the redeemer bought him back and set him free. If a piece of property had to be sold, the redeemer made sure that the title to the property remained in the family. And if a member of the family was hurt or killed, the redeemer pursued the legal options and collected the damages assessed against the offender.

That meant that whatever went bad, your redeemer would make good. What is broken would be mended, what is sick would be healed, whatever is lost would be restored and what is dead would be made alive! That's what Job

19:26 says, "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God."

"I know ... my Redeemer." His name is ... Jesus. Jesus is not a mystical, abstract, impersonal vague idea. Jesus has a strong hand guiding us and a tender heart loving us when we are faced with a long, dark hallway.

As our Redeemer, Jesus comes not simply to see that justice is done, but that mercy is given. Jesus bears whatever needs to be borne and carries whatever needs to be carried in order to see that our wrongs are righted. If a sentence needs to be served, he will serve it. If a fine needs to be paid, he will pay it. He does whatever it takes to set us free, even if it means his life for ours. Jesus forgives my guilt and Jesus destroys my grave.

And he did it all with skin on. Skin that felt the Roman whip at a place called Gabbatha. Skin that felt the blazing Palestinian sun while carrying his cross-piece on the Via Dolorosa. Skin that felt the thorns on his head and the hammering of the nails into his hands and feet. Skin and muscles and nerves that, for six hours, bled on a cross all alone in a long, dark, God-forsaken hallway called Golgotha. Jesus was attacked, by Romans. Scribes. Pharisees. And there was Satan who stalked our Savior, took aim, shot straight and killed.

But three days later the angels proclaimed, He is not here, He is risen! **“I know that my Redeemer ... lives!”** The angels announced, “He is alive!” John outran Peter to the tomb. Mary cried out “Rabboni!” The Emmaus disciples recognized the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. And when he saw the scars on the living Redeemer Thomas said, “My Lord and my God!” Death is dead. The grave is defeated. The free gift of eternal life is absolutely all yours forever and ever and ever!

People saw Jesus, literally. They didn’t see a phantom or experience a sentiment. They saw him in the flesh. And that’s because Jesus was physically and factually resurrected from the dead.

There’s a word for all of this. Grace. Grace is the amazing gift God gives us that says even when it’s all wrong around us, that at the very core of our lives, where we really are the most wrong, it is all right because God forgives all our sins. Grace is the gift of power—the power to be freed to be the person God wants us to be. Grace is the promise that on the days when we can barely cope with the circumstances of life that we can carry within us the faith that tomorrow will be better. Grace is the love poured out for us so that all our debts are paid, we are released from slavery, and our brokenness is repaired.

What's it all mean? It means that whenever you are afraid of the dark, you are not alone. Why is that? You have a Savior with skin on! I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES! "He lives, all glory to his name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same. Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives: 'I know that my Redeemer lives!'" Hallelujah!

Amen