"I Know that My Redeemer Lives"
Job 19:23-27

31 March Anno Domini 2002
The Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, Idaho
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The Lord is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

Dearly Baptized,

The message of Good Friday is that Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God died for the sins of the world. All transgressions have been paid for by Jesus, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. The message of Easter is of Life in the Resurrection of the crucified Son of the Living God. This has been the hope that God's people have always had, believed and confessed. It is the hope that Adam and Eve had when they beheld the body of their slain son. The promise of the Resurrection was all that they had. Abraham trusted in the Resurrection of the dead. Job did as well, and dear soul, your attention this morning is directed to Job's words written in time, confessed for millennia, sung throughout the centuries and lived unto and throughout eternity.

Job 19:23-27 -- Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last He will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

Job was a man - one of God's children - who was severely tested. Indeed, when we consider what happened to this man, we are even more amazed that he would make such a confession as: "I know that my Redeemer lives." Job was a blameless and upright man in the sight of God ... a man who feared God ... a man of repentance who was clothed with God's righteousness. He had seven sons and three daughters. His possessions included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and numerous servants. He was the greatest of the men who lived in the East at that time.

Then God allowed Satan to afflict Job. During a feast in which his sons and daughters were present, word came that all of Job's possessions had been taken and his servants either taken or killed. Another messenger reported more ... a large wind blew the house down where Job's children were feasting and it killed all of them. To make his condition worse, he was afflicted with hideous sores that covered him from his toes to the top of his head. Job had but three things left: 1.) his life, at least what was left of it; 2.) friends that did not give him wise counsel; and 3.) his wife who encouraged Job to curse God and die.

Job did not do this. Instead, he makes a remarkable confession of faith ... "I know that my Redeemer lives." It seems to go against the situation. But Job keeps his eyes focused on the Word of promise

and his Redeemer. Emotions and feelings, reason and thoughts must be kept at bay. In the midst of the whelming flood of what God permitted to happen to Job, the foundation of his life was the Word of God. Centuries later, the Lord Jesus would repeat the truth that Job confessed. Jesus told His disciples of all ages, He who believes in Me, though he dies, yet shall he live. The Risen Jesus proclaimed to His Church, Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the Crown of Life.

This promise of the Resurrection of Job himself and of Job's Redeemer ... this Incarnate Word of God ... is what kept Job spiritually alive even as his world was crumbling before him. He knew that not only was this Word of God the object, or the focus, of his faith; but it was also the means by which his faith was sustained. Job was sorely vexed. He complained. He moaned. In all of it, however, he did not blame God.

The foundation of Job's great hope was the Redeemer. The Hebrew word is "Goel" and the translation ... even the translation of "redeemer" ... does not convey the entire Hebrew meaning. Goel is used to describe the situation where a man had sold himself into slavery and the obligation to buy him back rested upon a kinsman ... a relative ... a goel. Job, because of the Good News first proclaimed to Eve in the Garden ... of the Promised Seed of the woman ... was confident that his Goel ... his Kinsman ... would buy him back from the slavery of sin and the bondage of death. This Jesus did for Job and for you and for me and for the world when He died on the cross.

From his confession of faith, "I know that my Redeemer lives," Job is telling us at least three truths concerning his Redeemer. First, he knew that his Goel was Divine. Job recognized that his redemption was not going to be from a man like himself. The friends of Job were attempting to convince him that he was suffering God's judgment because of a particular sin or sins that he had committed ... that Job was getting exactly what he deserved. This only reminds us of God's mercy and grace, and that the Redeemer is God Himself.

Only God Himself could be our Goel ... our Redeemer. God has sent His Son, not to punish us, but as the Kinsman to buy us back. God does not punish His children. All of the punishment that we deserve from God was taken out on His Son when He died on the cross of Calvary for all of the sins of all people ... past, present, future.

Secondly, Job understands that his Redeemer is personal ... "I know that MY Redeemer lives." Job knows that his Redeemer is not just a god who has set the world in motion and departed. Job knew, as you and I know, that God is present with us ... that He is Emmanuel, that is, "God with us" - not only during the happy times of life, but especially when the days are dark and the future seems uncertain. He keeps us in our baptismal grace, sustains us with His Supper and is with us always to the end of the age. His Word to you when you are hurting in body, soul and/or spirit is Good News. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden; and I will give you rest." All ye ... all of you ... ah yes, the personal, possessive plural ... "our" Redeemer.

Finally, Job understands and knows that his Redeemer is a Living Redeemer. Jesus is not a dead god like the stone cold Budda or Baal ... not a dead man buried in the dust of the earth like Stalin or Smith. Job knows that his Redeemer is not some theoretical or mystical deity on whom he throws himself as a last resort. Job is completely confident that his Savior is alive and, at last He will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Mary wept grieving tears as she faced a new day, not only because Jesus had been crucified and had died, but also because she thought someone had taken His Body from the tomb and she didn't know where it had been taken. But her tears were transformed from bitter grief to ones of joy and it all changed with the Incarnate Word addressing her by name in that garden early on the first day of the week. Then it was she lifted up her eyes and saw her risen Redeemer standing upon the earth.

Christ Jesus came to live for you, to die for you, to rise again for you ... all that you might hear that you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. With your mouth you sing "I know that my Redeemer lives" and with your tongue you confess "Christ is crucified;" and in your souls you believe that "Jesus is Risen." You join the faithful in the Church; ones like Job and confess:

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last He will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

What does this mean? I believe in the Holy Ghost Who "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will at the Last Day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true. Amen.