

ESF, Lord's day service message
9/14/2014

My Redeemer Lives
Job 19:20-27

I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth. 21 "Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. 22 Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh? 23 "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll. 24 that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! 25 I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! 28 If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him, 29 you should fear the sword yourselves; for wrath will bring punishment by the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment.

In downtown LA there used to be a gigantic sign on the side of a building near the city. It said "Christ is the answer!" Some asked, "So, what is the question?"

The book of Job illustrates the difficult questions in life. Why do good people suffer? Is there anybody who really understand all? Can anybody help a man who faces a fear of dying?

In the life of Job we can find the answer. Job was a very rich man with a happy family. He was the Bill Gates of his day. But one day Job lost everything- wealth, family, health, reputation and friends.

During a time of adversity, pain and darkness, Job speaks words as precious as diamonds and apples of gold: "*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God*" (Job 19:25-26).

Are you looking for an answer to severe adversity in your life today? Do you need comfort and hope in despair? Look into the life of Job. James 5:11 encourages us to learn from Job who overcame adversity with faith: "*As you*

know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."

Comfort from the Redeemer

By being inflicted with painful disasters, Job fell into a pit of despair. In verse 20, he cried in severe pain: *I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth.* In Job 3:1-2, Job regrets the fact that he was born: *Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said: 'May the day of my birth perish, and the night it was said, 'A boy is born!''*

In his severe suffering, Job expected some kind of comfort and encouragement from his friends. But he was disappointed by all their negative words about his situation. Because their words gave him confusion and trouble rather than answers or comfort. So, he replied back to them with anguish, *"Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?"* (verses 21-22)

This is what may happen to us when we expect comfort from men. No men's words can really comfort us because no one can fully understand the whole picture of our afflictions. While we look for comfort from men we may be more disappointed.

However, in such pain and despair Job was suddenly inspired by a vision. It was the vision of a Redeemer. With the vision, Job made one of the greatest confessions of faith in the Bible: *"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth."*

Job climbed out of his pit of despair into the faith of the Redeemer. The light of truth became fully visible in his eyes like a thunder! *"My Redeemer lives!"* *"I have a Redeemer!"*

There was a little girl who lived in an orphanage. The condition of the orphanage was very poor and dirty. Many times there was no food and she even was not able to take a shower because they didn't have enough water.

The older kids always took her food for themselves and annoyed her terribly. Whenever she told it to the director, he didn't believe her. And finally she lost weight and got sick. So, the poor little girl cried in total despair. She didn't have any hope.

One day, a letter arrived to her from outside. The letter said that her real mother would come and take her out of the orphanage. She was so glad and cried out, "I have my mother."

Likewise, Job cried out, "I have my Redeemer!" In ancient Jewish culture, a redeemer was a wealthy and noble person who was a relative of a helpless poor widow and who took care of all her needs and restored the honor of the widow's family. So, by these words, Job confessed that God was his Redeemer who would take care of all of his miseries. He was confident that although all earthly relatives and friends disowned him, his Redeemer would speak on his behalf and vindicate him from all sufferings.

As soon as he realized that he had a Redeemer, his heart was filled with comfort and peace. Job suddenly came out of the fog of his doubt and despair and clearly saw that his Redeemer God lived and would take care of all of his needs which nobody else could do.

We may paraphrase his confession this way; *I have a redeemer. So I don't care about all the sufferings I have been through. I don't care about the people's misunderstanding of my misery. I don't care that I have lost all I have. Because I have my redeemer. He will rescue me from all miseries.*

Job realized it not by studying or meditating hard but by the inspiration of God's Spirit. It was God's grace which let him know that there was a Redeemer for him.

What a great encouragement we have by what God did to suffering Job! Just as God did to Job, He assures us that He is our Redeemer when we are in the deepest despair and that He will vindicate us from all sufferings.

In 1952, Florence Chadwick, a swimmer, stepped into the Pacific Ocean, just off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the mainland of California. She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel – both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for 15 hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water, her mother, who was in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. But, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat they she discovered that the shore was less than a half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog...I think if I could have seen the shore I would have made it."

God did not create us to live in a constant fog. He has sent His son, Christ, to us as the Redeemer. In the midst of adversity, the Holy Spirit inspires us to see the Redeemer. In His Grace, we may realize that the Redeemer Christ takes care of all our needs and vindicates us from all sufferings.

In your time of affliction, hold on to the Redeemer, and keep persevering. The fog of despair will pass away and your heart will be filled with comfort and peace from the Redeemer.

Lamentations 3:19-22 says,

*"My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord
I remember my affliction and my wondering, the bitterness and the gall.
Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope.
Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed,
for his compassion never fails."*

Hope in the resurrection

Job also could persevere with adversity because of his assurance of the resurrection. In verse 26, Job confessed, "*And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.*"

Job knew that he was going to die. He knew that his physical body would decay and go back to dust from where it came. But he believed that he would see God with his own eyes. Job had assurance that he would rise again from the dead with the power of the Redeemer who always lives. His assurance of

resurrection gave him hope in the midst of total despair. All the incomprehensible adversity of his present life faded away when the Redeemer's resurrection assured him of his resurrection.

With assurance of the resurrection, Job also had hope of eternal life. He knew that he might die in his trials. But he also knew that his life on earth is not the end. Job was convinced that although he suffered a lot from his earthly trials there was a glorious eternal life after death. In verses 26-27, Job confessed that he would see the Lord in the eternal life: *And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

Job declared plainly that he had a full hope, that both the soul and body would enjoy the presence of God in the eternal life. This assurance set him free from the agony of his trials on earth.

There is a story of a woman with terminal cancer who often said, "There's nothing that the resurrection won't fix" What a blessed life we have in our assurance of the resurrection! By the resurrection, we will eventually overcome all sufferings and will have eternal happiness.

After Job persevered the adversity, the Lord restored Job's broken life. At the end of Job's life, he was blessed with seven times more riches than he had before. He was blessed with a new family. He was blessed with more possessions than he had before. And if God was able to do that for Job, He is able to do that for us because Jesus Christ is our Living Redeemer. The power of His resurrection surely becomes the answer to all our despair.

There was a woman in Korea whose husband was sick with the last stage of terminal cancer. He was hospitalized to receive treatment. In his same hospital room, there was another man who also had been struggling with the last stage of cancer. The man was full of the shadow of death in his heart. With his scary face, he frequently shouted that some people were coming to take him to a dark place. He was so afraid of it that he didn't want to die. Many times he tightly held his wife's hands and neck and said "I am afraid to

go there alone. Please go with me, please!” So his wife was almost suffocated by his arms.

Finally the man died. At the moment of his death, his eyes which looked so scary were widely open as if he mightily struggled not to die, and his face was disfigured by the fear of death. After the death of the man in the next bed, the woman’s husband became more scared and terrified by the fear of death. Her husband frequently woke up at night. He asked his wife to help him not to die. Until that time she had never prayed to God. But seeing the desperation of her husband’s agony, she was determined to look for somebody to pray for her husband not to go to the hell.

One day, a Christian woman came to pray for her husband and said, “Jesus is the Son of God. But He came as a human and died on the cross. And, He was risen from the dead in 3 days.” As soon as she heard the words, she became to realize that the resurrection was what her husband and she were looking for. The resurrection was the answer! Right there she confessed her faith in Jesus of the resurrection. Her husband also accepted Jesus in his heart. Several days later her husband also died. But she was able to see the clear differences between the death of the man who feared of death, and the death of her husband. Her husband showed a big smile on his face with his last breath. He accepted death in peace and rest. He saw his resurrection after death and left his earthly life peacefully. After that, the woman became a great testimonial witness in many churches in Korea about the horror of the hell and the peace from the Resurrection of Jesus.

Johnny Gunther was a handsome boy of sixteen when the shadow of brain cancer fell across his life. He majored in math and chemistry at Deerfield Academy and was a straight A student. Fourteen months after the diagnosis, he had endured two operations. After his second operation, he took and passed the grueling entrance examination for Columbia University. Two weeks after being accepted to Columbia, young Gunther died.

Before he died, he showed extraordinary courage and calmness. The doctors explained the life-threatening seriousness of the boy’s condition to Johnny’s parents, John and Frances Gunther. “What should we tell Johnny about his condition?” they asked the surgeon.

“He’s so bright and so curious about all that’s happening to him” the surgeon replied. “He really wants to know everything that’s happening to him, so I think we should be honest with him.” The Gunthers agreed.

The surgeon went to Johnny alone in his hospital room and explained to him the seriousness of his brain tumor. The boy listened attentively throughout the explanation, and then asked, “Doctor, how shall we break this news to my parents?” Such calmness and courage came from the hope of eternal life.

The true believers have the final victory which is eternal life through the Redeemer Jesus. Our souls will remain in rest and peace even in trials and in afflictions here on earth because of the assurance of our resurrection and eternal life.

In John 14:1-3 Jesus says, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms.-- And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*