

FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION

Christ is Risen! He is here as we receive Him where He has promised to be: in Word and Sacraments. Hear again the central theme text for this Resurrection Sunday:

For I know (that) my Kinsman Redeemer lives, and One coming after me on (the) dust will arise.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

In the ancient Israelite and Jewish ordering of the Scriptures (Kethubim), the Book of Job is the second in the order of writings. Over about three and a half millennia, Job's confession of the Faith has been proclaimed into the ears of the faithful. Job's words, declared here this morning, give comfort, in particular to those who are faced with what appears to be imminent death, theirs or a loved one's. In that ancient confession of the Faith, one who was facing his own mortal end – for, he was sure, no sin he had committed – brought forth enduring words of conviction that the One True God would vindicate him in innocence. Those who hold the Faith of the Christ, near to their falling asleep in the Lord, often cling to the promise of the coming resurrection – in spirit and body – that is promised in Job's inspired words.

Prior to the Son of God coming into the world in our flesh, to be our sin-bearer, the faithful believed unto death that their Kinsman Redeemer, Who even then was the living God, would rise up over the dust of death. They were convinced by the Word of God and the Spirit of God that their saving Relative would pay the price

¹ Job 19:25.

demanded by the Holy God for their full and free salvation. That is all summed up in Job's ancient confession of the Faith, which declares:

For I know (that) my Kinsman Redeemer lives, and One coming after me on (the) dust will arise.²

There is a lot packed into that phrase. Job writes as a man, though he does not know it at the time, who is under the direct persecution of humanity's most ancient foe. Satan, the accuser of man, the one who is called, Devil, that is deceiver, has taken it upon himself to test, tempt, and try Job unto cursing God, rejecting God, losing faith in God, and falling into unrepentant sin. Job is experiencing that pressure in his body - covered in boils; in his life - his children are all dead and his wife at one point tells him to curse God and die; and his spirit - he is so depressed that he has cursed the day of his birth. His friends pound him with his potential sins which might have contributed to his plight. No one is for him, and everything appears to be against Job.

Yet, even in his time of temptation, God has provided for the ultimate protection of that man of the Faith. Job does not know at that time that God had restrained his persecutor.

God had told the devil that he must spare Job's life. God always, though it may not be clear to those impacted by the effects of sin, this fallen world, and the devil, God always restrains evil for the benefit of those who call upon Him in the Faith. From the human perspective, that may not appear so, but in the eternal perspective it will be made clear. Back to Job's confession of the Faith:

² Job 19:25.

*I know (that) my Kinsman Redeemer lives, and One coming after me on (the) dust will arise.*³

Job's opening words are a statement of reality based upon that which he had just confessed and that which immediately follows. Before we get to that which came before, *I know*, we consider the words that flow from it. Job declares that he has a Redeemer. That word, from its Hebrew biblical usage, indicates that the one Who would buy Job back from all that which were causing him distress, anguish, and pain, that One would be a Kinsman. That means he would be related to Job.

The word we translate Redeemer is often used to indicate a near relative. This person, this man of the family of God's chosen people, would literally pay the price demanded to buy back any debt Job owed. In the best sense of the scriptural usage, this Kinsman Redeemer is the One Who rescues the downtrodden and those unjustly oppressed (c.f. Prov. 23:11; Lam. 3:58; Ps. 119:154). The Redeemer is One Whose words and actions contribute to the maintenance of life for the one being redeemed.

Having declared that the One Who redeems him is living, Job goes on to declare, *One coming after me on (the) dust will arise*, or, as other translations render the phrase, *at the last he will stand upon the earth (ESV)*. The "one coming after," or, "at the last," is, literally, "*the First and the Last.*"

Yes, dear ones, poor, downtrodden, sick, grieving, destitute Job declares that His near relative Redeemer is none other than, "The First and the Last," that is, God. You may recall that the Elder John, writing centuries after Job, uses that phrase to declare the

³ Job 19:25.

words of our living Lord, risen from the dead and bodily ascended into the heavens (Rev. 1:17f).

What this means is that Job, hundreds of years before Christ came in the flesh to die in his sins, your sins, the whole world's sins, confesses that He lives! He says, literally, *I know (that) my Kinsman Redeemer lives, and [the] First [and the] Last upon (the) dust will arise.*⁴ Centuries before the act was completed, suffering Job declares that Jesus the Christ, the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, will stand upon the dust – of Job's grave, and raise him up from the dead!

This year, that message has direct import for the members of this congregation. This Holy week just past, different members of our assembly have experienced the deaths of their immediate mother, a sister, and a brother. They, and we by extension, are living with the reality that Job was facing long ago – that we all will return to the dust of the earth from which God formed our first father, Adam.

Job's words declare that he has seen God – our Kinsman Redeemer – plant his victory flag upon his grave. This was so even before either of them died, each in his own time, in the Faith! Such an emblem, the blood-red banner of the Lamb of God, may be beheld as the faithful departed's testimony of eternal innocence in the Redeemer's blood.

In this place, over the remains of those who die in the Faith of Jesus, who fall asleep in the Lord, we lay funeral palls. These palls have images that testify to the

⁴ Job 19:25.

coming resurrection of the blessed who die in the Lord. They depict the peace with God the faithful receive from the death of Christ even as they enter into His eternal light.

What is all this talk about death? We came to hear of the resurrection of Jesus, you may say! Well, without death there is no resurrection. Because of Jesus' death in the sins of the whole world, the resurrection from the dead was guaranteed, sealed, and ratified. This is true for all who die, and a blessing for those who die in the Faith, such faith as Job's words continue to confess, as he declares across the millennia:

Even after my skin which they have thus struck off, yet from my flesh I shall see Elohe; Whom I shall see for me, and my eyes have seen and not (those of a) stranger; my kidneys fail within me!⁵

Those words build upon Job's confession of faith in his own coming resurrection from the dead. He faced that which was he certain was his imminent death. From his perspective, Job had nothing left to lose but his life (and his wife). Yet – since the two were one flesh – God's restraint that prevented Satan from taking Job's life meant that her life was also protected. This you may behold as more evidence of God's blessing one man to one woman marriages in the Faith.

Job was even then holding onto the Faith, even though he held forth some doubt. Job states that, even should his remains decay down to skeletal bones, God would give him new eyes to see his God, the First and the Last, his kinsman Redeemer.

This thought was so powerful that it moved him to describe it in bodily terms. For people of his era, the reins, kidneys were considered the seat of the most

⁵ Job 19:26-27.

tender and deep affection. His faith is moving him to long for salvation. He, whose physical body is literally wasting away, finds himself emotionally wasting away with longing for his Redeemer's salvation.

Job's confession is one that declares much more than a spiritual resurrection. Your Church musicians this morning knew that I would preach from Job today. They prepared the music and the insert that you might be edified in the Faith through the music that serves to support our day's text. You have already sung of the blessed resurrection in the Gradual hymn. It is tied to today's verses from Job. Remember that you offered these words as a confession of the Faith in sacrifice to the Living God:

*He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to bring me safely there.⁶*

That there is a coming bodily resurrection of the blessed dead is good news this day when the Church again hears of that which the white-lightened, brilliantly clad young man declared about the resurrection of our Lord to mourning women. For those whose loved ones have fallen asleep in the Lord this week (as in all weeks) there is comfort in the death and resurrection of our Lord. That is, even if their bodies shall return to bones, and eventually dust, there will be a resurrection to new life for them. It will be the resurrection, for the faithful, to eternal innocence of all sin, and an eternal separation from sin and from all who died unrepentant in their own sins.

⁶ Medley, Samuel. *Lutheran Service Book* 461, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives," St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006.

How can you be sure Job's confession remains true? Consider his opening words for today, and their fulfillment. Job still proclaims:

Oh that my utterances also were written; oh that in (a) scroll also they were inscribed; (that) with (a) stylus of iron and lead forever in (a) rock they were engraved.⁷

In the book of Job, there are twenty-two chapters yet to come following those words. They would record more events of his time of tribulation. That man certainly did not know all that he was yet to experience. He longed to have his confession of the Faith recorded. And it was. His words were recorded. They have been handed down from the faithful to the faithful unto this day.

About eight or nine minutes ago, I stated that Job's confession, *I know: my Redeemer lives* was based upon his previous confession. That is, that he had fervently yearned that his testimony would be written in a scroll, and engraved in rock. The reality is this, by Jesus' resurrection day, Job's word had been circulating among the faithful for fourteen to eighteen centuries. It appears to have been translated from ancient Arabic into Hebrew. It had been handed down until, in 430 B.C., Ezra the Scribe put it into a final edition.

Job's words were read in biblical Hebrew, and in the Common Greek, in the homes and places of worship of the faithful of the first century A.D. God had visibly answered Job's desire for a record of his faithfulness. Then, in the resurrection of Jesus

⁷ Job 19:23-24.

from the dead, He had shown His response to Job's confession. Jesus is the fulfillment of these words that you may confess in the Faith:

For I know (that) my Kinsman Redeemer lives, and the First and the Last on (the) dust will arise.⁸

To help reinforce the revelation of the mysteries in that text, long ago it was paired with resurrection texts concerning Jesus. They help to make it clear that Jesus is the Kinsman Redeemer Who Job believed was coming after him. Jesus met the test of the text. Jesus, in his human nature, was a blood relative of Job. Jesus, on account of His divine nature, could buy him, and us, pay back sin's wages and remove from us all its eternal consequences.

Jesus is the Kinsman Redeemer for all who are of the Faith. He stepped up to pay our debts, exalting them onto the wood of the cursed cross. He died the death each one of us deserves. He rose from the dead as the firstfruits of the resurrection from the dead of all who die with saving faith in the Redeemer. Him you know to be the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Our bold confession of the Faith proclaims:

No one but God alone can separate the corruption of our nature from the nature itself. This will take place wholly by way of death in the resurrection. Then the nature which we now bear will arise and live forever, without original sin and completely separated from it.⁹

God in our flesh has taken all the burden of sin, death, and yes, even hell itself into His sinless flesh. With Job now, we await the resurrection of those who fall asleep in His Faith. We believe that our human nature has been completed in Jesus. We

⁸ Job 19:25.

⁹ Tappert, et al. *The Book of Concord*, Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1959, 467.10

believe that He shall raise us from the dead with but a Word. That is why we continue to boldly confess: Jesus is risen!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Resurrection Hauptgottesdienst (LSB One-year series)

Job 19:23-27; I Corinthians 5:6-8; Mark 16:1-8

April 16, 2017

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Soli Deo Gloria

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¹⁰ Job 19:23-24.

¹¹ Job 19:25.

¹² Job 19:26-27.