

I KNOW THAT MY
Redeemer
LIVETH

Invitation: *The welcome is universal, the entrance is free... the invitation is open, the hand is extended. There is no time limit - the time is now. All are invited and all are welcome. Come, for the meal is ready!*

Hymn: Servants of the Saviour 520

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord be with you: **And also with you.** May we open our hearts. **May we know your presence.** It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every- where to give thanks to you, Redeemer, Saviour and friend (we continue in prayer) Come to us, giver of redemption, and let the bread and wine before us bear your life to our life, nourish us with his vision of hope, and unite us in one body of peace. **We remember his death, We proclaim his resurrection, We await his coming in glory; Renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love, and unite us in the body of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Communion

Following communion *O God, you have so greatly loved us, long sought us, and mercifully redeemed us. **Give us grace that in everything we may yield ourselves, our wills and our works, a continual thank-offering to you. May this meal we have shared renew us and inspire us to join more joyfully with you as you work for peace and justice in the world. Amen.***

Hymn: The blessing of the God of Sarah 618

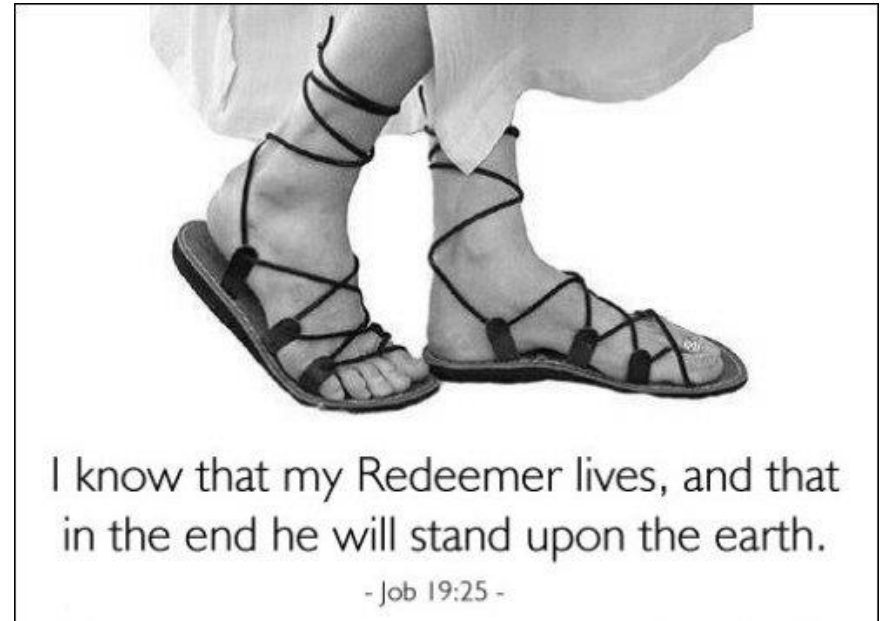
Postlude

WELCOME TO

The Presbyterian Church of

Saint David

November 06, 2016



Call to Worship: (adapted from James 5:11) *Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. **We have heard of the endurance of Job, and we have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.***

Hymn: I worship you, O God (1-2) 16

Confession: **As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last he will stand upon the earth. After my awaking, he will raise me up; and in my body I shall see God. I myself shall see, and my eyes behold him who is my friend and not a stranger. (rite for the Dead)**

Hymn: Hymn: Sing a new song unto the Lord (1-2) 422

Confession: *We give thanks to you, Lord, for you have done marvellous things! When we were walking in darkness you were there, you were there, when we were kneeling in weakness you were there, you were there, when we drew near feeling worthless you were there, you were there, when we were needing forgiveness you were there, you were there, when we were searching for your grace you were there, you were there. We give thanks to you, Lord, for you have done marvellous things!*

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. Hear the word of the Lord in Jesus: 'Your sins are forgiven!' Thanks be to God!

Hymn: Sing a new song unto the Lord (3) 422

Introduction:

Job as Wisdom Literature, a body of texts that challenge traditional thinking... here both God and Job's friends are challenged. The firm stance that Job takes in the passage flows from his isolation and sense of unfair persecution.

Scripture: Job 19:23-27a

"O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Hymn: Your faithfulness, O Lord, is sure (1-2) 104

The details of his hope

The first feature of Job's words is that he believes he has a message for all future generations. He expects to die soon, but he does not believe that even his death should make him silent. Although he has been severely assaulted, he is not defeated. Although he has lost much that was valuable for him, he still has what was most precious. Although he is about to die, he does not intend to let people believe he has passed away in darkness.

We can see his plan in verses 23 and 24. He wants someone to record his words on a scroll and then go to a rock and inscribe them there. The scroll would be used to read aloud to a person or group and here Job wants to tell listeners about what really matters to him. The allusion to the rock could be a reference to the practice of travellers on a journey being helped by words and drawings inscribed on rocks to tell travellers that they were on the right road to their intended destination. SO despite his sense of darkness in the present, he wants to be a guide to others on their journeys.

The Person

The word 'redeemer' refers to the individual called the goel or kinsman-redeemer. He was the person who had the responsibility to defend and vindicate the interests of his relatives when they were deprived of everything and in great need. Job needed such an individual because he expected he would soon be dead and he was powerless as he faced that prospect. So who could this person be who would be Job's relative and the destroyer of death?

Job says something else about his future Redeemer (goel). In verse 26 he says that his Redeemer will be divine. The Redeemer will be God himself, the one who had created Job and the one who remained in control of Job's circumstances, even the ones that had been most difficult to experience. So we now have three details about Job's goel: he will be a relative of Job's, he will conquer death and he will be divine.

Hymn: Your faithfulness, O Lord, is sure (3-4) 104

In defense of his case, Job marshals the language of the court. He wishes for written and permanent evidence to document his case. The shift in the technology of writing between verse 23 and verse 24 from destructible book to more durable rock engraving shows the intensity of his desire to be heard both now and into the future. The protestation of his innocence and the unfairness of his treatment form the core of the words that Job wishes to regard for posterity. The grammatical form of the wish in verse 24 indicates the desire for a wish that may never be fulfilled. The book shows that Job recognizes that in taking God to task, the balance of power is stacked against Job (9:3-4, 13-22). Therefore, the permanent record forms one of Job's legal refuges against God. The second legal remedy that Job appeals to here lies in the figure of the redeemer (Hebrew *go'el*). Established to support vulnerable persons in the community, the *go'el*, a near relative, functions to protect individuals from undue physical and economic violence (Leviticus 25:25). While for most of the Old Testament the *go'el* is a human being (see Boaz in Ruth), Second Isaiah theologizes the function making God the *go'el* (Isaiah 41:14; 43:14; 44:6).¹

With the "redeemer" as one of the attributes of God in mind, Christian readers can easily read verse 25 as an affirmation from Job that he will see God. Even more, the references to surviving beyond the corruptions of the flesh invoke the example of Jesus leading to the notion of Job standing in a post-resurrection encounter with the living Jesus. While the choice and placement of this verse in the libretto of Handel's *Messiah* goes a long way in reinforcing post-resurrection interpretations, C. L. Seow points out that the Old Greek's translation of 19:25b-26a as referring to "God's raising of Job's skin" marks a crucial start in the resurrection related interpretations of this verse. Early understandings of Job as seen in Old Greek appendix of 42:17 and the *Testament of Job* lay the groundwork for Christians as early as Clement of Rome to use 19:25-26 as a proof text of resurrection.²

In this book, Job does the unthinkable and stands up to God. Job's stance consists not merely in the easy and all-too-common question as to why God sends natural disasters. Rather, Job raises the serious questions of who we understand God to be and how God relates to humans in the world. Jacob wrestles with 'God'

throughout the night and would not let go until a blessing was given... here Job clings to a promise of a Redeemer he will not let go of until a blessing is given... this is paradox – blaming and clinging at the same time.

"I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you" (Job 42:5). Job's hope has been fulfilled, not perhaps in the way that he expected, but fulfilled nonetheless. And it is the fulfillment of that hope that leads Job to embrace life again.

Job's movement from despair to hope, from death to life, is made explicit in the Septuagint translation of the book. The translators added this note to the end of the book: "And Job died, old and full of days. *And it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up.*"

"I know that my Redeemer lives!" Job clings even in the midst of despair and grief to the God whom he also accuses. And in the end, against all odds, his hope is fulfilled. He sees God; and having seen God, he is drawn back into life again.

"I know that my Redeemer lives!" For millennia, through prayer and preaching and beautiful music, the Church has proclaimed that Redeemer to be Jesus the Christ. It is a word of hope in the face of despair, a word of life in the face of death. And so it is a word appropriate to this All Saints' Sunday, when we remember and celebrate the saints who have gone before us, the saints (including Job) who clung in faith, against all odds, to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the living (Luke 20:38), who is faithful even until death, and beyond.

The book should not be understood as a historical account, but rather as reflections on the problems of the suffering of the innocent, the prosperity of the wicked, and the place of God in all this...

Key word: redeemer over against the tester/tempter