

To God Alone Be The Glory

I like asking people, “What do you know?” Most people take it as me being friendly, and that’s good, because that’s one of the way the adults in my young life taught me to be friendly. But it’s also a genuine question: “What do you know?” The question has been catching St. John’s students off guard lately, like it did me when I was young. “What do you know?” Many students answer, “Nothing.” I respond, “It’s a good thing you’re in school then.” They smile. When I ask adults here at church, “What do you know?” and they respond with, “Nothing,” I like to say, “Well, you’ve come to the right place.” They smile. This last week a student came back with a quick answer. She said, “I know I’m wearing a pink shirt.” Then I smiled.

Some years ago a talk-show host used to include this question as she interviewed her guests: “What do you know for certain?” She was really asking for a statement of faith, like a person’s starting point, the idea that anchors a person’s attitude about life. I wish I had seen one of her guests come back with, “I know God loves me because of Jesus,” or “I know the Bible is God’s Word.”

If Job were here today and we asked him, “What do you know?” he would respond confidently with, “*I know that my*

Redeemer lives.” It is my sincere hope that you will MAKE JOB’S CONFIDENCE IN THE RESURRECTION YOUR OWN.

“OK, but who was this Job?” As far as we can tell, he lived about 1900 BC, which would make him almost as old as Abraham. We don’t know who recorded the events of Job’s life, but God’s people have always included the Book of Job in the Bible. Jesus quoted from it as a sacred text, which convinces me I can trust it for gaining spiritual wisdom. The book describes Job as “*the greatest man among all the people of the east*” (1:3). In one day God permitted Job to lose all his flocks, herds, servants, and 10 children. After a while Job also lost his health. A painful disease caused boils to erupt all over his body and discolored his skin. Lots of people have turned against the Lord for less trouble than that, but what does Job do? He praises God by saying, “*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. May the name of the LORD be praised!*” (1:21). “*Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?*” (2:10). But eventually the pain gets to him. He complains about his suffering, and he asks God to appear and explain why He has allowed such suffering to come to Job. But Job never gives up clinging to the Lord in faith.

Usually pain causes people to turn in on

themselves. Pain makes it harder to think of others. Even at his lowest point, which happens in the middle of the book, we hear Job speak the words of our text. ²³*Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll.* I want my words to be read later on and not forgotten. Oh, that my words ²⁴*were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever* so they will be more permanent.” What does Job want everyone to know? ²⁵*“I know that my Redeemer lives.”*

“OK, but what does Job mean?” Job is confident that he has a redeemer. In Bible times a redeemer was a relative who took on the duty to make things right. A redeemer might buy you back from being captured as a prisoner of war. A redeemer might buy up your debts because back then they didn’t have bankruptcy, they had slavery. But Job isn’t a prisoner or a debtor. He’s physically ill and grieving the loss of his children. If you’ve had any serious trouble in life, you can identify with Job. Yet Job anticipates that his Redeemer will act on his behalf: ²⁵*In the end he will stand upon the earth.* In order for Job’s Redeemer to live and stand upon the earth, he will need to have a body. Job also seems to expect that his Redeemer will pass from this life and then come back into flesh.

That’s a lot of hope for a man as sick as

Job, yet he does not hope to recover. He’s getting himself ready to die. But he’s going to die in faith. Listen again to what Job expects to happen after he dies. ²⁶*After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another.* The One who will buy me back from this sickness and trouble is alive. He’s alive, and he’s going to right the wrong of my predicament. *How my heart yearns within me!”*

Whom could Job be thinking about when he speaks about his Redeemer? Another human being? Not likely. Job was the greatest man in that area of the world. So then Job’s Redeemer must be God. Could Job be referring to the coming Messiah? Adam and Eve had been told about the One who would someday come and crush the head of the serpent who had led them astray. Job had a good understanding of the true God and lived in a close relationship with him, working hard to obey God’s commands. We don’t know how much of the coming Messiah’s life Job knew about, but Job’s words line up with Jesus’ life. He would **live** by taking up a human body and being born. He would complete his work, pass from this life, and at the end of earthly time, come back and stand upon this earth to bring justice and to right all wrongs. Job is asserting: “My God has not gone off and died and left me to suffer by myself. No,

he's alive and he going to do something about my predicament. He is my Redeemer, my kinsman who, sooner or later, will come back in the flesh for me."

But Job seems to expect that he will die and return to the dust he came from long before his Redeemer comes back. You see, the Hebrew for "*stand upon the earth*" doesn't mean to stand on planet Earth. It means to stand upon the ground, the dirt, the soil, the earth. In other words Job believes his Redeemer will come to the place where Job then was. "My Redeemer is going to come and stand on the ground where I am buried" or "stand on the dust that I've turned back into."

Now if you are saying, "Oooo, how morbid!" you're missing the point. Job is saying, "My Redeemer is coming *here*. And after my skin has been destroyed, I'm still going to see my Redeemer, with my own eyes. Although my flesh will have turned to dust, my body will come back together, and I will see God. I will be back in the flesh for him." See how Job looks up from his earthly troubles to the wonderful life that his Redeemer has waiting for him on the other side of the grave? **MAKE JOB'S CONFIDENCE IN THE RESURRECTION YOUR OWN.**

In a way I hope you're comparing yourself to Job right now and thinking

something like this. "Wait a minute. Job was a righteous man. God himself said so. My shortcomings have been many. There have even been times that I knew what God wanted from me and I did the opposite. Maybe I'd rather not rise from the dead to face God."

But this is where Jesus' resurrection comes into the picture. Remember: Jesus died late Friday afternoon, even before the soldier pierced Jesus' heart with his spear to make sure Jesus was dead. Jesus' friends buried him before the sun set. On the following Sunday, this same Jesus left his grave clothes behind in the tomb undisturbed. The Scriptures reveal they were lying in the same place where his friends had left Jesus' body on Friday. A little later an angel of the Lord came and rolled back the stone to show that Jesus had already left.

Why is all this significant? Because Jesus had been dead. And why did he die? Certainly not because he was a criminal. Governor Pilate certified Jesus as one who had done nothing wrong. So why did Jesus, an innocent man, die? Because he volunteered to take our sins on himself and suffer the consequences. When it was time to die, he said, "*It is finished*," which means, "Paid in full." Our whole sin-debt to God was paid by this Jesus. That

makes him our Redeemer.

This Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. He had told his disciples he would rise from the dead. And now, Easter morning, he repeatedly showed himself to be alive. Jesus' resurrection is actually the proof that God the Father accepted Jesus' death as full payment for our sins.

Consider what this means for you. If you die and your skin gets destroyed, your Redeemer will stand over your grave on the Last Day and call forth your body from the tomb, and you will stand before him. And when you do, Jesus can point to his resurrection as the evidence that God has already pronounced you not-guilty, righteous enough to sit down at the heavenly feast next to Job and all the other believers whom Jesus washed clean and took home.

Make Job's confidence in the resurrection your own. All the dead will rise. It will not be a good day for those who kept pushing God's message out of their daily and weekly schedule. But those who trusted in Jesus will rise to eternal life. Make Job's confidence yours simply by believing God's message to be true. Now I'm not saying that if you believe it, it will become true. I'm saying: it's true already, believe it. Trusting in Christ's

work makes Christ's work yours.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that faith in Christ will help you only at the end of your life. Consider Job. Before Job's troubles came, knowing that his Redeemer would raise him to eternal life was what motivated him to follow God's commands, to be kind to others, to make peace with others, to love God more than the things God had given him. Then when the troubles came, knowing that his Redeemer would raise him to eternal life was what strengthened him to accept his suffering without faulting God. Job's Redeemer gave him power and hope every day. Look what blessings come to all of us who trust in Jesus! Let's MAKE JOB'S CONFIDENCE IN THE RESURRECTION OUR OWN.

What do you know? 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; ²⁷I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!* That's a good way to die. That's a great way to live every day.