

Grace mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear friends in Christ, He has risen! He has risen indeed, Alleluia.

Today I dare to proclaim: Alleluia, a word that had been removed from the vocabulary of the church for the past 40 days, and now on account of Jesus my Savior, on account of the empty tomb and the resurrection of my Lord, I dare to say “I know that my Redeemer lives. Alleluia!

Just last night, I was awoken by a small voice crying out Daddy, Daddy. I looked at the clock. It was 2 in the morning. Oliver had a bad dream and he was scared.

To a four year old, who has lost his stuffed lovie, even though it might be sitting on the floor and in plain sight, it is as if his room might have well have transformed into a catacomb. Spider webs on walls, zombies under his bed. Skeletons in the closet. All he can muster the words, “Daddy, Help”.

That was last night, but today is Easter morning. In the midst of last night’s skeletons that are all too real, I am going to invite you for the ninth and last time to come along with me into the book of Job. For those who have not been with us throughout Lent, we have been using the Book of Job as the object of our meditation for the past 40 days.

Earlier in the service we sang the famous song:

I know that my Redeemer lives.  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, he lives, who once was dead.  
He lives, my ever-living Head....

You know the song, but I’d be willing to bet, the majority of you did not know that hymn is based on the Book of Job Chapter 19.

Marvelous and powerful words, spoken by Job. Especially, given that if there was a man who knew about Catacombs, monsters, terrors in the night, Lord have mercy, it was Job. In Chapter 19, Job is sitting in a pile of ashes, with a shaved head, scraping boils off his body with a broken piece of pottery. This is after his ten children have been killed by a tornado. After raiding bandits have stolen everything from him. Lightening has killed all of his animals and servants. Job has been reduced to nothing. He is a skeleton of his former life.

But brothers and sisters in Christ, that was the nightmare of last night, today morning has dawned, and it is Easter. He is risen, He has risen indeed Alleluia!

Although we are not insulated from life's tragedies, just this week we witnessed a shooting at a Christian day school in Nashville. A couple of years prior, during Holy week, one of the greatest churches in Christendom, Notre Dame, burned to the ground, in a pile of ashes or even in a graveyard... consider the triumph: Job 19:25 is the Mt. Everest of the Book of Job. He proclaims

“<sup>25</sup> I know that my redeemer<sup>[e]</sup> lives,  
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.<sup>[d]</sup>”

<sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet<sup>[e]</sup> in<sup>[f]</sup> my flesh I will see God;

<sup>27</sup> I myself will see him  
with my own eyes—I, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!

Let's unpack Verse 25...

Job confesses “I know”. What does he know? He knows living nightmares. In Job 3:35 Job knows “What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened.” In Chapter 19 Job knows... he does not say “I think”, “I want”, “I hope”, “I'd like”... This is not wishful

thinking. It is not, “although I’m ruined, I will wish to live forever, thank you very much.” Job knows...

There are a lot of things I don’t know.... Just ask my wife. I don’t know where my wallet is. I don’t know where my cell phone is or where my keys are. On a more serious note, I don’t know why friend died of cancer, I don’t know why that accident happened, or why relationships we thought were perfect fall apart, but like Job I dare to confess “I know”.

I know what? “I know MY Redeemer. When I grew up I used the Shirley method of grammar. I learned there is a lot can be said about a possessive pronoun. “My” is not His redeemer. Not her redeemer. Not their redeemer or Your Redeemer. He is those things but He is more than that. He is My redeemer. It’s personal, it’s particular, it intimate and individual. Jesus is “My” Redeemer. You can say that with me all the way to the resurrection of the dead.

In the Old Testament a redeemer was a close relative—someone with skin on!—

An example? Boaz in the Old Testament. When Naomi’s husband and two sons died, they had nothing to their name except some land. The one daughter-in-law Orpha decided to go back to her home country where her family was from. But Naomi and Ruth, however, resorted to stick together and sell their land and try to survive. Before that happened, Boaz steps into the picture. Boaz paid for their property and took Ruth as his wife as well as allowed Naomi to live with them. The Bible calls Boaz a redeemer, a restorer, a nourisher of life. That’s what a redeemer is. If life has dealt you a bad hand, or if you have gotten yourself in to deep doo doo debt, a redeemer would step in pay off your debts and set you free. A redeemer takes what is bad... and makes it good.

A redeemer takes what is broken and mends it, a redeemer takes what is sick and heals it. Whatever is lost a redeemer restores it. What is dead a redeemer makes is alive! Stop right there... really? That's what Job 19:26 says, "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God."

I know my Redeemer and His name is JESUS. Jesus is my redeemer. He is our redeemer... and our close relative. In fact, the Bible calls him a Brother. AND the point of Easter is that Jesus is no skeleton, Jesus is very much alive, and if there was a sentence to be served Jesus served it, if there was a burden to bear Jesus beard it, and if there was a fine to be paid, he paid it... skin on! And that's good to know.

Because when Oliver cries out for help, it is not enough for me to be with him in spirit. Similarly, when I'm going through something tough, it's not enough to have an aloof God, a god that might push some button in the sky occasionally, but when the going gets tough he disappears. "I know my Redeemer Jesus... He lives and I live in him." He is not a mystical, abstract, or an impersonal vague idea. That is not our God. Jesus redeemed me skin on, and what did it take?

It was the most vile cruel execution method ever invented. No one can top it, not even an Islamic terrorist or Vlad the Impaler. The Romans perfected the greatest execution method and Jesus like a lamb before its shearer was silent, Jesus took the punishment in the flesh. His skin felt the whips, the nails, the cross beams. And he died for you. And you can bet, when the soldiers place him in the tomb and shut the door no one expected that stone would roll away.

The Apostles creed confesses that Jesus descended into Hell. In other words, "Jesus was stone cold Dead." And he went where the dead go... Shaol.

Three days later this cry rocked the world, “I know that my Redeemer... lives!”

2000 years later we sit in these pews and even simple observation can tell us that Easter is still having its effect on us even today.

Why? Because, Christianity is the only world religion that claims that our founder is still alive. Mohamad is dead, Buddha is Dead, Joseph Smith is dead, Mahavira is dead, Confucius is dead. You get the picture. Death always wins... but not anymore.

Many people believe Job is the oldest book in the Bible. It makes sense. It was written in the context of the patriarchs of Israel. And that was a long time before Moses authored the Pentateuch. What’s the point, death has been a problem for as long as there has been recorded history.

But dear friends, I know that my redeemer lives! Today the tomb is empty. He has risen! I’m here to tell you, a little bit before sunrise, Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead. That Jesus triumphed from a tomb and if you trust in Him the same will be true for you. Like Him you will die, but also like him, death will not be able to hold you.

Paul said, “Jesus had a death like ours so we too will have a resurrection like his.”

I was talking with a guy just the other day. He was in his seventies. And he said, I am looking forward to seeing Jesus in the flesh, but he said I just hope I’m good enough.

I’m sorry to say... But you are not good enough. You are not good enough to conquer death... Your life deserves death. But I’m happy to say you don’t have to be good enough. Why? Because you have a redeemer. And if you trust in Jesus because He rose from the grave, you will too.

That is why I'm here... I'm not here because of fluffy and cute bunnies. I'm not here because I like hard-boiled eggs. I did not wake up at 5:30 this morning for candy. The reason I'm here is because I know that my Redeemer lives! What a message... a message that challenges us, but it is also a message that changes us!

So here is the bottom line. You cannot ignore the resurrection. The resurrection silenced all the doubters and every sceptic in the Gospel texts. So even now, how about you? Believe and you will see God in your own flesh. He has risen. He has risen indeed alleluia!