



I see a lot of family here today. One of the things that people like about festivals and holidays and church celebrations is spending the time together with their church family, and if possible, with their family. That's not always possible for everyone. But you know there are other options, right? Isn't it just as good if maybe you can just connect online? Of course, we know it's not nearly as good as meeting in-person. Having a family member with you, having them in person meet with you, talk with you face to face, just can't be compared to anything else. If you try to set up a video link or try to just call them on the phone, it's something. But it's just not the same as getting to sit there right next to them. We want to meet in person with the people that we know, people we love, and family. I spoke this week with several people who couldn't meet with their family. Their desire to meet with family was one of the most important things and they were sad to miss those they loved. Maybe some of you feel that way or some of you are enjoying the benefits of being able to meet with others. There's no substitute, is there, for meeting in person?

What about when it comes to not just our family, but our God? What about as a child of God and as brothers and sisters in Christ being able to gather with our heavenly Father? What about being able to be close to our brother Jesus, being able to be in the presence of God? Nothing can really replace that. Today as we begin a new series this Easter season looking at how we attain our resurrection goal. We're going to see one of those goals of the resurrection is being with God in the flesh. And there's nothing that can beat that. We'll look at the word of our God from the book of Job as we consider that this morning.

Job was someone who had lived a life that was close with God. He was someone who lived a holy life and blameless in every respect. The people around him would have to say, "there's a man who loves his God." And yet what we see in the book of Job is God basically stepping aside from Job. God challenged the devil saying, "look at my servant Job, go ahead, see if you can get him to turn aside from me." And Job was afflicted so terribly that it's hard to say there's any deeper description in ancient history or a longer tale of someone's suffering than Job.

This is just about the middle of Job's book, and in the middle of his discourse, you get to Job's lowest point. It's so bad, you see actually what Job wonders about the most. He knows and he recognizes God must have abandoned him. He says, "God has wronged me." As Job makes this blasphemous accusation and makes a charge against God, he then says the other pain is that he's alone. His family isn't there. We read in Job 19, "He's (God's) alienated me from my family. My acquaintances are completely estranged from me." And Job says, "My breath is offensive to my wife and I'm loathsome to my family."

Not even his closest earthly companion will draw near him because he just stinks. Job is facing what none of us want to face. His flesh is literally rotting away, and you can imagine how frustrating it would be to feel that God has afflicted you so badly, and you smell so bad that your body is literally rotting off of itself. Job says here, "I'm saved with just the skin of my teeth." Literally, he's basically saying I've just got the gums in my mouth and that's about all I have left.

But then when Job is at his worst, when he's feeling the most abandoned by his loved ones, alone, that's when we also see him turning to the only place he can. Isn't it that way with us? When we find ourselves at our deepest moments of despair --maybe your flesh isn't rotting like Job's was but you find yourself separated from friends or loved ones--, you find death is coming out that door, and you find yourself at wit's end and you feel like God is against you. Isn't it sometimes then, maybe even for some of us, only then that we truly begin to appreciate what we have in God's Word? And for Job, it was almost too late, but he made his confession as he's about to face death.

He says, "I know something that I can hold to." In fact, he knows it so well. He says, "*Oh that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool engraved on rock forever.*" He sounds confident about this truth. This is not wishful thinking. This is his confession of faith. And mind you, Job is probably one of the oldest characters we have in the Old Testament. He probably predates a man like Abraham. And yet Job has a clear confession that God's people have had for all time. "I want the world to know. I want this Word to be passed on."

You get to hear today what Job said. His words were written down. We don't know how long they were engraved in a rock or written down in iron, but they were passed on year after year, generation after generation, thousands of years, that you could hear his confession today. Job says, "*I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand on the earth.*" First of all, Job calls this person his Redeemer, his living Redeemer, a man. He will stand on the dust of the earth. And "*in the end*" probably means the end of time. After all people have gone to the grave and we all go back to dust, *this one* will stand on the earth.

He calls himself "the first and the last." (Isaiah 44) And Job calls him the Redeemer because he also reveals himself as the one who came for this world to pay the price for death. So Job says, "*My Redeemer lives and after my skin has*

*been destroyed,* (in other words, he'll be dust, he will die,) *yet in my flesh I will see God.* Job had a resurrection faith. Job had a faith in a Redeemer who would raise him out of the grave. And probably equally comforting for us is that Job had a faith in a God who would still bless him even though Job deserved punishment and death. God would revive him from death and make him his own, call Job his purchased, his redeemed. That's us.

Job would in the end of his book have to confess he had spoken harshly against God. And he would repent in dust and ashes. It's the same for us. Someday we might taste a flavor of Job's affliction. We might feel that separation, we might hit that low. But we can say with full confidence what Job says, "I know my Redeemer lives."

Can you picture those women on that Saturday when their Redeemer had died? Jesus had been placed in the tomb. If any time in the New Testament was one of the darkest hours, it had to have been that day. They saw their Lord die on the cross. They saw him placed in the tomb. Can you imagine the grief, the suffering, the feeling of separation from their Lord as he had died?

But then when they came that morning, the first day of the week, there was no one in the tomb except for what is described as a young man who was really an angel. This angel said, "*He's not here, he's risen!*" And notice what the angel says to them. They take it all in just like Job did and like we do. "He is risen, go to Galilee and there *you will see him.*" Isn't that what our confession is like? Isn't it just like it was for Job and those women? We know our Redeemer lives. And on the basis of the word and promises of God, we know we will see him.

And that's what Job confessed. "*I myself will see him with my own eyes. I and not another while my heart yearns within me.* You know someone who's fallen asleep in Christ and confessed these words. It doesn't matter how terrible that death was or how much guilt they faced in their life. They have a Redeemer. He lives. He will raise them on the last day. He will raise Job on the last day. And he will raise you who believe in him on the last day. All those who trust in him are redeemed from the curse of sin by his death on the cross when he took the curse from us. They will rise and will live as surely as Jesus, our Redeemer rose to life. And we will be able to say with Job that "*we will see him.*"

There is no better goal than having a resurrection goal where we will see God in the flesh -- not just like a portal looking through some internet gateway but rather seeing him with our own eyes in person, meeting with our God.

That's the way that the resurrection is described in Scripture. I want you to hear a portion of the prophecy from Isaiah when it describes what it will be like when we reach our resurrection goal. Picture us living in the flesh. We read from Isaiah 25, "*On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.*"

I don't know what you're planning to do to celebrate the resurrection today but maybe you have some sort of meal planned. One day we will enjoy that in the flesh having time for food and friendship. Imagine this in the eternal kingdom the feast of rich foods for all peoples that the Lord Almighty has prepared after the day of resurrection when all is made new. He says, "*On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever.*" And then in the flesh, "*the Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. And on that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God we trusted in him and he saved us. This is the Lord we trusted in him. Let us be glad in his salvation.'*"

All those who do not confess this will face a day of judgment at the resurrection. But all those who with Job call him a redeemer can say that we are his people. Notice what Isaiah says. "*Those who trusted in him*" will in that day see their God face to face.

Christ is risen and in the flesh --flesh glorified-- we will see him with our own eyes. And we will enjoy living in the flesh with God in the flesh for the rest of our days. This is our resurrection goal. We reach it by faith in Christ: even after your skin has been destroyed you will see God. Amen.