

Text: Job 19:23-27 Six months until Easter. **October 5, 2014.**

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Have you seen these Christmas stores? How can a store be open all year 'round, when they only sell stuff for one day? How do they keep a store running? How can they play the same music and have the same greeting, "Merry Christmas"? How do their employees stay employed and busy, all year 'round? People love Christmas. In a way, our church is very similar. But instead of a Christmas store, we are an Easter place, an Easter place all year 'round. Think about this. We gather every week to celebrate Easter, the resurrection of Jesus. We gather on the same day of the week that Jesus rose, every week, all year 'round. Maybe we let the Easter hymns go for a while and maybe we don't use the same greeting every Sunday. But when I say, "Christ is risen!" You know how to respond. All year 'round. We have people whose sole job is to keep on proclaiming this good news. "Christ is risen!" All year 'round. That's why we have this six months until Easter celebration. And today is exactly six months until Easter. So we remember to celebrate Easter all year 'round. Easter really is for all year 'round.

We get that example from Job. Job was a real person whose true life story would fill several seasons of reality TV and weeks of sermons. Can't do that now, but 140 characters won't be enough either. Here's somewhere in the middle. Job lived several hundred years before Jesus was on the earth. Job was faithful to God. Job was very blessed by God and wealthy, with ten children. God allowed Satan to take away Job's children. They all died in one day. God allowed Satan to take away all Job's possessions. On the same day! When Job continued his faithfulness, God allowed Satan to afflict Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job had three "friends" who came and took the devil's side. They spend many chapters of this book telling Job, "You must have done something very evil for God to treat you like this. You need to admit your big evil and then things will go well with you again." Now Job never lost his faith in God. Job didn't succumb to the advice of his wife and curse God. But Job had questions. Job had doubts. Until right here. Once Job remembers Easter, Job's attitude changes. Once Job reminds himself, "My Redeemer is going to raise me from the dead! I'm going to live with a new and perfect body! I'm going to see God with my own eyes!" then Job's attitude changes. He's more positive.

In fact, Job is so certain of Easter, he wants his words recorded, permanently, written down, on a scroll, inscribed with an iron tool, on lead, engraved in rock forever! When I was at the youth rally with a few teens from church, there was a huge rock on the college campus, where graffiti was allowed, even encouraged. Some of the rally organizers got up early and painted the rock with the rally theme, "No fear!" But someone else came along and spray painted over that later. Job, however, wanted his Easter words, "I know that my Redeemer lives!" on a rock, permanent, inscribed, forever.

Is that what you want? I know that my Redeemer lives! On a rock, permanent, inscribed, forever? About the only time we see anything inscribed in rock it's on a tombstone, only two dates. Birth and death. The one date so seemingly full of hope. The other so seemingly final, finished, eternal. Have you been like Job and doubted God, and you didn't have to have ten children die, just one get really sick? Have you been like Job and wondered, "Does God really love me?" And you didn't have to lose all your possessions, just your job for a few months? We easily forget Easter. We sinfully forget Easter.

Then be like Job and shout, "I know that My Redeemer lives! I know that my Redeemer lives! I know that my Redeemer lives!" And so you know what, "I will live, too!" He lives and so I will live! My Redeemer is alive and so I will be alive! Yes, that second date on your tombstone will be an eternal date, the date you entered eternity with your Redeemer! The date your struggles are final, finally over. The date your race is finished! Let me encourage you to put another date on your mind, inscribed in rock, forever. Your baptism date. That date is your own personal Easter, the date you died to sin and rose to a new life, a life with Jesus, a life forever. Easter is for all year 'round. Your baptism is for all year 'round.

Let's just take a little look at the permanent, inscribed in rock words of Job. "I know." We have a hard time conveying just how Job said this. He said it with certainty. I know for certain. I know this as a fact. Rock on this earth and lead and iron are not permanent enough for me to inscribe how certain this is: I know that my Redeemer lives!

Now Redeemer was a special word. A redeemer was a close relative who paid the price to buy a family member out of slavery. A redeemer paid a price to make a claim, "This person is part of my family! They can't be a slave. They are my kin!" Apply that to yourself, just like Job did. God is my Redeemer. God paid the price to free me from my slavery to sin. And silver and gold were not enough. All the money in the world was not enough to pay the price for me. God paid a far more valuable price: his own Son, his own blood, his holy and precious blood, his priceless and pure blood. Maybe like Job your "friends" at school don't make you feel very valuable. But God said, "You are worth the price of my Son!" Maybe the boss at work is constantly putting you down. But God said, "I want you on my team! Look at my nail-pierced hands!" Maybe your family gets upset when you are late to family gatherings

because you want to come and celebrate Easter every Sunday. God says, "You are part of my family. My family is eternal. I am your own Father. I am your perfect brother. I bought you. I own you. I redeemed you." Yeah, put that on a rock. My Redeemer lives!

Lives! Lives! He is alive! He lives! God is not dead as Nietzsche said. Nietzsche is dead, as God said. You will not die. You will live. Whoever lives and believes in Jesus, will never die! Will never die. Jesus lives! My Redeemer lives! He's alive. I had a vicar several years ago who would put at the end of every email, "He lives!" He did that all year 'round, because My Redeemer lives all year 'round. Easter is for all year 'round.

And Easter is very personal, all year 'round. Notice how Job spoke. Job didn't speak in terms of other people. Job didn't talk in terms of the world. When it came to Easter, things got personal. "*I know that my Redeemer lives. And that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed. Yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes. I and not another.* How my heart yearns within me." Even the one phrase that doesn't have I or me or my is still very personal. When Job talks about My Redeemer standing upon the earth, he's telling us, "My Redeemer will stand on my grave, my dust, and My Redeemer will raise me!" I'm going to put my faith in My Redeemer because my Redeemer is the only one who will still be standing. Presidents and terrorists and stock markets and comedians, they will all fall, but My Redeemer will still be standing. And My Redeemer will raise me up so I will stand with him, next to him, right beside him.

My skin might be destroyed (and remember that Job had painful sores all over his body), yet this skin, new and whole and perfect, will again surround a new and whole and perfect body and my eyes will see God. Whoa! Stop the presses! Hold the phone! My eyes will see God. No one can see God and live. Without holiness no one will see the Lord. But when my Redeemer raises me, I will be holy. In fact, I am holy now, because my Redeemer counted his holiness to me. It was May 23, 1971. Remember I told you to remember your baptism day all year 'round, because that's your personal Easter, your personal application of holiness, your personal privilege to see God with your own eyes. Man, can you ponder that? Have you ever stopped to think about that, seeing God with my own eyes.

And I won't be seeing through someone else's eyes. I will be seeing with my own eyes, I and not another. These words have the idea, "I won't be a stranger to God." God will know my name. God will have that name written in his book of eternal life. God will talk to me not just like a friend, God will be my friend. And even though God will know everything about me, uh oh, God will only say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come and share your master's happiness. Come one, let's hang out for eternity. I've saved a mansion just for you. The food is on me. The best steaks and the finest wines. It's all free. Eat, drink and enjoy yourself. I'm so happy you are here, Nathan." Sorry, I had to insert my own name, because Easter was so personal for Job. I trust you inserted your own name.

Doesn't your heart just yearn for that heaven! Don't you just long for that resurrection! Don't you wish a little bit God had told you the day you would go to heaven so you can count them down with the seven year old's excitement for countdown to Christmas! Wow! Man! Dude! I just can't wait! Job said he used up all his strength just thinking about this. His heart ached. His kidneys were sore. All his insides just were ready to burst with joy he just couldn't wait! Easter is not just for old people who want to be free from suffering. Easter is for you, personally. The resurrection is not just for the future. The resurrection is for now, all year 'round. Easter is for all year 'round. Easter is for eternity.

Don't save Easter for just one day. Wear the special bonnet all year 'round. Guys, put on the pastel shirts every Sunday if you want. Greet each other every day with, "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!" Easter is for all year 'round. Amen.