

## Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, April 13, 2014.

Good morning to you all.

The blessings that have been poured out upon this little church -- a spiritual oasis in a waste, howling wilderness -- over the past few weeks give us every one cause to rejoice "in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven". (Luke 6:23) It is certainly true that the treatment we have received at the hands of this nation utterly mirrors the manner in which their spiritual fathers treated the prophets of old.

All because of our words, beloved. All because of the peaceful and sincere delivery of these blessed words of our Saviour to their ears and eyes. They chased Christ out of Nazareth, like they chased our little troop out of Moore, Oklahoma. And please do not forget the words of John in Revelation:

*"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, **and for the testimony which they held:**"*

(Revelation 6:9)

So, I say let us continue to hold that testimony -- that Christ will soon return to make these present adumbrations of His power and wrath look like Alice's tea party with the Mad Hatter, and we just cannot hardly wait!

Now in my musings over these latest kisses from our Savior's mouth, a sermon preached by Joseph Caryl -- which I read many, many years ago when I was young and filled with the vanities that possess youth -- flooded back into my memory with a delightful degree of comfort. Considered in itself, the sermon provides a look into one of the greatest professions of faith in all of Scripture. The words treated in this sermon are from the Patriarch Job, in his response to his friend Bildad's second round in their curious colloquy, to wit:

*"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27)*

In today's sermon, I shall endeavor to bring to light just some of the amazing comforts that flow from a sincere consideration of these words, and particularly in the context of the seven-verse oracle (Job 19:23-29) this profession is wrapped within. It would be my joy to give a cup of this water from the Fountain of Living Waters, to this little group in the name of Christ, because ye belong to Christ (Mark 9:41).

Job was, like all we here, a Gentile! On good authority I submit to you that he was an Ishmaelite who dwelt in the land South and East of Canaan during the years that the Children of Israel were in captivity in Egypt. He trafficked among Edomites, Ammonites, Midianites, and Moabites, including those of his best friends coming from these nations.

There was no Mosaic law. There was no daily national reminder -- through ceremonial mandates -- that the Messiah was promised to the Children of Israel. Moses had not yet arrived on the scene, much less established the laws of the sin offerings, and thanks offerings, etc. Job was a Gentile in a Gentile world -- much like Abraham when he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees.

But despite the spiritual darkness that surrounded this Patriarch of our faith; and indeed despite dwelling among nations of people whose very names are synonymous with the enemies of God: Midian, Ammon, Moab, Edom -- this man is branded for eternity with the only words that matter, to wit:

*"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; **and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.**" (Job 1:1)*

Knowing this about him, and without engaging in a worship of the creature -- but rather considering "the patience of Job" as we have been instructed by the Apostle James -- it is a wise venture to look at what he speaks when the afflictions come and he goes into the valley of the shadow of death. What can we learn from these words that will provide us with real and genuine comforts? For we know:

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16)*

Job lost all his wealth, yes. Job had a disease beset his flesh and bones -- bursting through his skin in burning, itching, pustules -- yes. But while he spoke of these in some manner or other during his expostulations, I submit to you that these were not the most grievous of his sufferings. A short detour, I think, will help us to see what it was most oppressive to our friend.

***"For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came."*** (Job 3:25)

What was this thing that Job so feared? What was it of which he was so very afraid? My dear friends, these are the deep things that possess our human flesh, and our saviour is touched by them and has prepared a remedy for them, to wit:

*"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15)

If you read that very curious and altogether edifying report about our friend, you will see (I trust) most clearly what he was so terrified of. Consider the words written in the first chapter ... the ***curriculum vitae***, if you will ... regarding our beloved co-elect:

*"And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: **for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.**"* (Job 1:4-5)

We know that fear. We have loved ones who we see behaving in ways that cause us to fear for their souls. Indeed, we're even instructed in such matters about all of those who walk with us in this way, to wit:

*"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"* (Hebrews 12:15)

Job lived in continual fear -- as part and parcel with his fear of God and hatred of evil -- that his children would die in an unrepentant state and would split hell wide open! And what does the scripture tell us in that matter?

*"While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." (Job 1:18-19)*

While his life preceded the writing of the following words, it is of no doubt that Job was profoundly aware of the sober truth in the matter:

*"But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: **bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days**; but I will trust in thee." (Psalm 55:23)*

Poole: "[N]ot half of what others live, and they by the course of nature might live; but shall be cut off by God's just judgment, by an untimely and violent death."

So we should consider this point as one wrapped into the context of the words of Job under consideration. Other key contextual points can be found in the remainder of the oracle in which our key text is found. The oracle begins in verse 23 with an introductory salvo that extends through verse 24, to wit:

*"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" (Job 19:23-24)*

At least three additional, valuable contextual niblets can be culled from this two-sentence introduction. They are found in answering: (1) What words? (2) What book? (3) What rock?

First, what words? The choices are simply: (a) The whole of Job's words throughout his life (not likely). (b) The words included in within this intense debate between Job and his three friends (more possible, but also not likely since he himself said plainly "therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." -- Job 42:3). (c) the words that will soon

follow this introduction, relating to the greatest subject matter of Job's life -- and of our life; the redemption of our body in the day of the Lord (the likely meaning).

Second, what is the book of which Job speaks? Again three choices are considered: (a) the "books" which contain the whole of all mankind's affairs. This is highly unlikely, as it would be a fool's dream to seek to be judged out of the "books" of Daniel and Revelation referring to the Great Assize or General Judgment, to wit:

*"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, **and the books were opened.**" (Daniel 7:10)*

*"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; **and the books were opened:** and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things **which were written in the books,** according to their works." (Revelation 20:12)*

It is of no doubt that this process will include an examination of every rebel's *"hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him"* (Jude 1:15), but it could hardly be thought that Job sought such a horrid event for himself.

The second option (b) would be that he referred prophetically to his words being secured into the cannon of Scripture that makes up part of this *"more sure word of prophecy; whereunto [we] do well that [we] take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place"*. (2 Peter 1:19). While this is certainly a truth, it again includes those words of Job which darkened God's counsel, and were most shameful, in the words of Job himself, and therefore is not likely.

The book it most likely refers to is (c) that book to which John the Beloved refers - - and about which I have previously spoken to this beloved assembly -- in Revelation, to wit:

*"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." (Revelation 5:1)*

For a more thorough examination of this book, I refer you to my previous sermons on the subject. For here and now, let me say with great joy that it is the Book of Redemption, holding our covenanted rights and privileges as the children of God. Job seeks to have his account written therein, and to include these words that are shortly to follow -- which in every way relate thereto.

The third context to consider from Job's introduction is the rock, upon which he desires his words be written with an iron pen; and filled in with lead to make sure and fast the words. Rather than chase the world's wisdoms in this analysis, I will shortcut to the happy ending, by use of inspired words, to wit:

*"Nevertheless the **foundation of God standeth sure**, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Timothy 2:19)*

*"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, **and upon this rock I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)*

*"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (Psalm 118:22)*

Job wants all to understand that he believes his name and his faith are secured in the very Rock upon which all our hopes are anchored; that he trusts *"in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:"* (Isaiah 26:4)

Having opened a bit of the introductory context to the central verses of this sermon, I will provide some exploration of the closing context. Where the former words give a flavor of the certainty of Job's confidence in his profession, the latter brings us a distinctly different flavor; that of a very sober warning, to wit:

*"But ye **should** say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment." (Job 19:28-29)*

I submit that these words, properly understood in the heat of this distressed man's spirit, are best articulated in today's vernacular thus:

*"If you three friends had any understanding of the gravity ... the eternal consequence ... of this doctrinal dispute we are having here -- with my broken and beaten body, and weary soul on display for your vicious, hypocritical persecution -- you would now understand that I have resolved this question with the trump card! The King of kings' 'X', if you will! It is time for you to close your Arminian shop and flee the field before you find yourselves as overthrown as the antediluvian hordes or the sulfured Sodomites!"*

So let us, with these helpful contextual hints, turn to our Patriarch's words and see if they can bring us some excited consolation as we look upon our current posture vis-à-vis an angry, dying world. Having spent the first 22 verses building up a head of steam about the horrible and unjust treatment he has received at the hands of his community -- no doubt as filled with social-engineer-types blathering ceaselessly about their poisonous "love" as ours is -- he explodes forth with what has been described as the greatest profession of faith in all of Christendom.

*"For I know that my redeemer liveth," (Job 19:25a)*

This is not a guess! This is not, like these hypocrite "Christians" among whom we presently dwell -- who like Job's three friends: *"have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."* (Romans 10:2) Job says "I know! By the mercies of God I have added 'to [my] faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge' (2 Peter 1:5) and therefore I know!"

There is an energy that you should see -- in this context -- that I can describe more fully with this short story. In the 90s, at the point when the venom of this nasty, hateful, fag-dominated city had pulled out all the stops, this little church was under Satan's siege! Arrest warrants were pouring forth from a crazy District Attorney, signed by an adulterer judge who was not going to have us telling him that he could not have another man's wife! The police were joining the fags in violent harassment of our picketers -- pouring over the scene of spontaneous assaults upon us looking for ways to arrest us.

In that environment, my beloved friend and fellow elder was being trotted into the jail on another lying charge. Puts me in mind of this passage:

*"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, **he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.**" (Acts 9:1-2)*

So, I was assigned to work the booking desk when a smarmy police officer was bringing my beloved brother into the booking area, after having been patted down like a common thug. As he hands me the warrant, he commences boasting about his "catch". In mid sentence, he froze -- because he saw the expression on my face as I said "I know who he is." As much as if to say: "I know what is in your dark heart to do to this man, but I also know that he is not in your hand to dispose of, so get your pimply face out of mine -- if you don't have anything further for me!" The energy -- not the words -- so offended the clod that he made a formal complaint about me.

"I know!" Says Job. "That my Redeemer liveth! He is **MY** redeemer. Mine by the terms of the everlasting Covenant of Grace!"

*"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, **we might have a strong consolation**, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:" (Hebrews 6:17-18)*

I have a Redeemer! A Goel! Satan has laid his slimy serpent mitts on my inheritance, but my Redeemer has bought it again with His blood! Satan has cast me into prison and beat me sore with my own sinfulness and wretchedness, but my Redeemer *"is greater than [my] heart, and knoweth all things"* (1 John 3:20), and so has bought me again, to wit:

*"Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." (Job 33:24)*

Even my life was sought by this enemy -- and those who declared themselves my friends took up his cause and became *"miserable comforters"* (Job 16:2) who poured Arminian salt into my grievous wounds! But my Redeemer is an Avenger, and *"when he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth [me]: he forgetteth*



*not the cry of [His] humble [servants]!"* (Psalm 9:12) He is our Redeemer, and you had better come to terms with that reality, because of Job's next and terrifying point:

He lives! Not lived. Not "will live". Not "lives at present for awhile". Our Redeemer does not simply have life -- He IS life!

*"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, **and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6)

"My Redeemer", Job expostulates, "as the spring source of every creature's life, has power to lay down life and take it up again!" Consider in these words that Job speaks of a Redeemer about whom he has no record of having taken the form of man, that He might fulfill that critical term of the Covenant of Grace -- yet through faith he is given to understand that He liveth! Like his spiritual father Abraham before him, Job is one of those who:

*"all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* (Hebrews 11:13)

But this expression that Job has knowledge that he has a Redeemer who inhabits eternity and who is the spring source of all life is not a sufficient profession for the challenge that has been leveled against him by his three friends. What is the issue of this dispute? What will be the end of all these words, for which his friends accuse him of vanity?

*"and that he shall stand at the latter **day** upon the earth:"* (Job 19:25b)

The word "day" in that verse is interpolated, but is not in the original text. To properly understand the greatest force of the words, I recommend you remove that word from the sentence. It is certainly true that our Redeemer will return in the latter day, and he will assuredly stand on that day on the earth, to wit:

*"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein*

*are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:" (Revelation 10:5-6)*

But this message of Job -- to his polemic nemeses -- includes a component that should be part of our answer to every mocker and scoffer in our age, to wit:

*"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:3-4)*

Our Redeemer, Job tells us "shall stand **LAST** upon the earth"! He will be the last being standing! He is the first and the last! All else will bow down or be cast down in His presence! When our blistering-mad Redeemer stands on that last day, he says:

*"I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Isaiah 45:23)*

*Keep silence, all created things,  
And wait your Maker's nod;  
My soul stands trembling while she sings  
The honors of her God.  
Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown  
Hang on His firm decree;  
He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be.*

Isaac Watts

Having articulated His faith regarding both the power of God and the interest he holds in the Covenanted kinship with the Redeemer, Job next articulates the specific term of that covenant with which his present miserable condition makes him most intimately engaged.

*"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:26-27)*

The forensic assault on Job, by his three friends, has been very personal -- through five separate lectures -- charging him with the greatest of iniquities and hypocrisies. Therefore he says in the verses leading up to this great explosion of faith talk:

*"All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me." (Job 19:19)*

Having received so personal an assault, Job now makes very personal his certainty regarding the redemption of **HIS** body! The Apostles, having seen the direct evidence -- or at least the direct record -- of Christ having risen Himself from the dead in the very bone and flesh body that died, they spoke very boldly regarding the resurrection, to wit:

*"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philippians 3:21)*

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:52)*

But here we have a man who had no such record, but that record of Christ dwelling in him and granting him so great a faith as to know intimately about the ravages of death -- and the very certainty and very personal nature of the resurrection unto life!

In the context of this dispute, however, I recommend that you consider Job's words of faith as an argument to throw into the teeth of his friends -- to scare them off from their grievously sinful arguments of works righteousness; of Karma, if you will. As if Job argued thusly:

"Satan has been given leave to cast my sinful flesh into this prison. Like brutish keepers, you imagine that you can beat me to final consumption and death before I can have hope of trial -- much less acquittal! But you three fools have seriously miscalculated. Whatever you do to me in this prison, I will very certainly have my time before the Judge -- and when I do, I will see my dearest and best Friend seated on that Judgment Throne. To your complete terror, you will see this treasonous case dismissed and yourselves cast into outer darkness!"

These words of Job are not passive and hopeful. These words are spoken with authority, as if dealing the death blow to all of their fallacious argumentations. This is why Job's very next words are so confident and strong:

*"But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?" (Job 19:28)*

Our faith in Christ our Redeemer, our friend, our brother; this is what sustains us in our greatest trials, Satan's greatest assaults. We know. We very specifically and certainly know that our Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand in the latter upon the earth. Our very best Friend, beloved, is the Judge of all!

I love you.

Amen