

Date: November 16, 2025

Texts: Job 19. 23-27 / I John 3. 1-3

Title: "My Redeemer Lives"

Intro -

re: Job - a book we've heard of...

maybe - a book we've never read (because -
it's pretty much all about gloom and suffering...)

and yet...

we have here - in ch. 19, and - as celebrated by Handel -
a beautiful affirmation of faith

but before we get into that...

consider this:

"An absolutely essential road sign to observe while driving through the rugged terrain of the book of Job is: "beware of lovely affirmations of faith." With Handel's soprano air ringing in our ears, this road sign flashes neon yellow when we are approaching Job 19. 25. If we fail to pay attention to this road sign, we will be inspired by Handel, but will detour around the rich theological claims and challenges of this perplexing text from Job, [where...] the individual claims belief in God's ultimate triumph in spite of whatever pain he or she may endure in this life...

"Reading (or singing) these verses out of context can distort our understanding of the Job story..."

where the bottom line is this:

life is / can be:

imperfect... painful... even gruesome...

but - we can get through it if... when...

we can affirm - as here - with Job -

do you know that your redeemer lives...?
do you know that he shall stand upon the earth...?
do you know that you will see God...?
- no matter what

I) About that Suffering

there is carnage in the book of Job...
there are gruesome sights and descriptions...
there is so much human agony -
and - not just “in the book...”
but -
as reflected in the lived experience of Job
nobody wants to dwell on these...
- that’s almost certainly *not* why you came to church this morning
(i.e. - “Hey hon - life is good... the sun is shining...
birds are chirping... and my skin is aglow from a
refreshing shower...
- I hope Jeff will preach on suffering -
especially bone-crushing personal losses, and -
boils appearing on the skin that have to be
scraped off with pottery shards...”
Yep - that would be just the ticket...”)
(or...
if you did...
see me after coffee hour...)
you may be familiar with broad strokes of Job...
you may even know the particulars:
he loses his family - his sons... his daughters... his servants...
he loses his wealth - measured in oxen, donkeys, sheep and camels...
he loses his physical well-being (painful sores and boils from the top of
his head to the soles of his feet...)

he is in a rough place, and when his friends come to try and offer
some consolation, all they can come up with is this:
“You must have done something awful, to suffer this badly...
Say you’re sorry, and maybe things will get better...”

his friends think “answers” are the solution, and - by golly -
they will force Job to come around to their way of
thinking, come hell or high water...

so...

Job also experiences relational loss, because...
these guys are “nimrods...”

suffering calls into question all manner of things...

- does God care...?
- can God do anything...?
- why doesn’t God do something...?
 - why... - me?

throughout this book -

Job seems certain that God is aware of what’s going on...

but -

he never resolves the perennial question of “why?”

- that is not the reason for the book
(much as we’d like it to be...)

he does, however...

offer us much in the way of an eloquent embrace of faith -
and - of the solace... the comfort... the hope...
to be had there

II) About that Affirmation

our passage in Job begins with... reflects a desire for...
a permanent record of his suffering:

“O, that my words were written down...”

- he wants this story to be inscribed...

to be known to all people... for all time...

and -

it is

and -

it connects

we resonate with his situation

(even if we have never experienced anything quite like it...)

we feel for him as he seeks answers

(because who wouldn't do likewise...?)

so can we...

place ourselves with Job when he affirms -

- in the midst of recording this incomparable record of
suffering and anguish -

can we affirm that we know:

my redeemer lives...?

at the last, he will stand upon the earth...?

and in my flesh - I will see God...?

I will stand in the presence of God...?

can we affirm that, and -

in the affirmation -

find the comfort and the assurance we need
to face the lives that we live?

when our child comes home from school, in tears,

because they were shut out on the playground...?

when our spouse comes from work with news of layoffs...?

when we stand beside the hospital bed listening to the doctor
deliver “not good news...”?

when we gather at the graveside to say a final “good-bye...”?

(where I said these words... made this affirmation...

just this past Thursday - as I do whenever I stand graveside -
for a 103 year old WW II Vet...)

when we face these, or -
any number of the trials life brings our way -
can we face them because...

we know - deep down inside - that:
our Redeemer lives?

cf. - per Philip Yancey:

“Human beings grow by striving, working, stretching; and in [a] sense,
human nature needs problems more than solutions...

Kierkegaard said that Christians reminded him of schoolboys who
want to look up the answers to the math problems in the back of the book
rather than work them through. I confess to such schoolboy sentiments, and I
doubt that I am alone. We yearn for shortcuts. But shortcuts usually lead away
from growth, not toward it. Apply the principal directly to Job:

what was the final result of the testing he went through?

As Rabbi Abraham Heschel observed,

“Faith like Job’s cannot be shaken...

...because it is the result of *having been* shaken.”

cf. - we have all - at some point... in some way...

been shaken

has our faith seen us through?

we have all - at some point - had to deal with anxieties

is our faith grounded... and hopeful...?

relate - I read about something called “range anxiety” -

maybe you’ve experienced it -

- the fear that your car may run out of fuel (gas or electric charge...)

(I must admit - I have a bit of this when it comes to considering
what kind of car to buy...
not sure I trust electric...)

but... one of the many fears or anxieties that may cross our ways...

i.e. - We're out in the middle of nowhere, and suddenly we notice that
the fuel gauge is on "E"! We fear the worst.

Stuck on the side of the road with a car that has no fuel,
the next town is 89 miles away, and that 18-wheeler we see blasting
down the highway toward us is being driven by an axe-murderer...

note - apparently...

you really need to work at it to run out of power because EV companies
do everything possible to show the driver the remaining power,
and where you can go to recharge.

cf. - Tesla, for example, does the following:

- When you leave the range of all known chargers, the car warns you.
- If you are navigating to a destination, the car will know the remaining range and distance to your end point.
- If you are approaching your destination and low on range, the car will recommend a specific speed reduction to ensure you reach your destination. These warnings are very hard to ignore.
- As the range gets below 10% remaining, the battery symbol turns yellow and then red.

If you run out of charge on the road, according to the website,

"it will be *in spite of the best efforts of the car*.

You have to ignore a significant number of warnings.

The kind of warnings that get your attention.

Things like chimes, yellow exclamation points on the driver cluster and
a yellow border pop ups on the main screen"

so...

would God do less...?

consider...

a recent survey found that among EV owners,

95% had never run out of power while driving.

Furthermore, 77% no longer worried about it after their purchase.

(Perhaps this is due to the number of safeguards an EV has...

...before running out of battery power)

In other words -

the car is looking out for you...

when you know that your redeemer lives...

when you can say that - at the last, he will stand upon the earth...

when you have the hope - that you will see God...

- all of that means you know... you can live based on...

the sure and certain knowledge...

the wonderful and beautiful affirmation...

that God is looking out for you

... and always will.