

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost - Year C

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Job 19:23-27a

Psalm 17:1-9

II Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

Luke 20:27-38

11/10/2019

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke:

27Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to [Jesus]
28and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies,
leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for
his brother. 29Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless;
30then the second 31and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died
childless. 32Finally the woman also died. 33In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife
will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

34Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;
35but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection
from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36Indeed they cannot die
anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the
resurrection. 37And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story

about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.”

The Gospel of our Lord.

Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Job

Good morning! Have you ever had a rough year? Or, maybe you have had a REALLY bad day. The kind of day that just makes you want to climb into your bed and start all over... Maybe it's not even a series of bad things in your day, but one major event that completely turns your whole outlook around. I remember a rough couple hours when I was in college. Megan lived on campus but I commuted the 10-15 minutes to Wheeling Jesuit University. It was sometime in the evening and she called to see if I had a particular movie she could borrow. This was basically a rhetorical question. I had about 500 movies at that time, of course I had it. Well, Megan and her friends wanted to watch it, and since we were still dating, I was conned into driving the movie over to her. So I jumped in the car, crossed over from Ohio into West Virginia and ran through a YELLOW light. I think you know where this is going now. I was through the Wheeling tunnel when I saw the cop lights. I started to pull over, thinking they were after someone else, but they pulled up behind me. Now here is the thing, I like to speed, and I understand that driving fast can result in speeding tickets. I'm not happy about getting

them, but I understand. But running red lights is not part of my usual M.O. I got the ticket, there was no arguing out of it, but with God as my witness, that light was yellow.

Needless to say, my mood was ruined. In less than 60 minutes my outlook had changed. Now, can you imagine weeks of pain? How about months of suffering? That's what happened to our man Job in the first reading today. If you're new to the Bible, the book is spelled "J O B" but isn't pronounced the same way as you would say the work you do for pay. Dave Etling, my Younglife leader in high school made this mistake and always goes out of his way to make sure others don't too.

Job is a book that has always been close to my heart, and I think it speaks to almost everyone who reads it. To understand why this book is so important, you need to understand something called wisdom literature. Wisdom literature isn't unique to the Bible, but is seen in many cultures of the time. Interestingly, wisdom is almost always presented as a woman in Scripture. She walks the world, looking for those who can hear her. We see this type of literature in books like Proverbs, Song of Songs, and parts of the Psalms. We see it in places where we hear good advice like Proverbs 1:7: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."*¹ Now, while this type of scripture is hopeful, there was another voice in scripture that wasn't having the same experience. There were people who were following all the right proverbs, but didn't seem to be having the same results. It is out of this experience that books like Job, or Ecclesiastes. Where as books like Proverbs are categorized as practical

¹ Proverbs 1:7 NRSV

wisdom, Job is part of the skeptical wisdom category “... *that questions the value of practical wisdom.*”²

Here’s the quick version of everything that happens to Job. He’s the model human being, God even brags about how faithful Job is, which sets the whole story off. All of Job’s animals run off when the servants that were with them die. Then Job’s daughters and sons die. Finally, he gets sores all over his body. His wife tells him to curse God, and his friends tell him that it must be something that he did to anger God, which isn’t the case at all. God has been watching throughout the whole story. When Job finally demands why God is doing all this to him, God shows up and in a move that has always confused me, God doesn’t really answer why. What’s so amazing is that in the midst of this pain, in the midst of this months long suffering, Job utters our first reading:

23“O that my words were written down!

O that they were inscribed in a book!

24O that with an iron pen and with lead

they were engraved on a rock forever!

25For I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;

26and after my skin has been thus destroyed,

then in my flesh I shall see God,

27whom I shall see on my side,

² Fant, Clyde E., Donald W. Musser, and Mitchell G. Reddish. *An Introduction to the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001. p. 240.

and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”³

Throughout it all, even though he has had questions and doubts, Job’s faith has only grown and deepened. I have always wondered why God doesn’t answer Job, but I’m starting to connect some dots. Dr. Dan Bell in seminary used to say that even if we knew the reason for our pain, would it really change how we felt? Would knowing why our loved one has died change the pain of their loss? I don’t think so... And the lack of an answer is, in my opinion, one of the reasons why this books has spoken to generation after generation. We keep coming back, and in the midst of our pain, take comfort in the words of a God who lives, a God who knows, one who as Job says:

“²⁵For I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;

²⁶and after my skin has been thus destroyed,

then in my flesh I shall see God,

²⁷whom I shall see on my side,

and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”⁴

Amen.

³ Job 19:23-27a (NRSV)

⁴ Job 19:25-27a NRSV