



I Know that My Redeemer Lives

Grappling with God: The Gospel According to Job # 9

Job 19

David Sunday

August 24, 2014

Who taught the sun
Where to stand in the morning
And who taught the ocean
You can only come this far
And who showed the moon
Where to hide till evening
Whose words alone can
Catch a falling star

The very same God
That spins things in orbit
Runs to the weary
The worn and the weak
And the same gentle hands
That hold me when I'm broken
They conquer death to bring me victory

He lives to take away my shame
And He lives forever I'll proclaim
That the payment for my sin
Was the precious life He gave
But now He's alive and there's an empty
grave

Chorus:
And I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
All of creation testifies
This life within me cries
I know my Redeemer lives

(Redeemer by Nicole C. Mullen)

We will be in Job 19, looking at a verse from which this song originated. Let's pray together as we begin this time in God's holy Word.

Oh God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, our eternal home, we take refuge in You. We find our hope in Your gospel and in Christ alone. We are the broken, You are the Healer. Jesus, Your Son, is our Redeemer and He is mighty to save. Forever we'll sing of our love for You and we pray that as we open Your Word and hear it today that You would increase our love for You, and our hope and trust in You. We ask for the power and help of Your Holy Spirit to illuminate these words to our minds and hearts and to empower my preaching. Lord apart from You I can do nothing so help me I pray, for the good of Your flock, whom You have chosen and redeemed; whom You are carrying through manifold joys and sorrows until we all come before Your throne of grace and see our Redeemer

face to face. We look forward to that day. Come Lord Jesus! Come soon! We need you, Lord. Amen.

In Job 19 a ray of light penetrates the dungeon of Job's misery. We see both the trial and triumph of Job's faith in this chapter. I'm very thankful for the way God has ministered His Word to us these last three weeks. It's been so good to hear the Word through Dave DeHaan, John Piper and Dan Leeper. Last week Pastor Dan left us with a deeply moving exhortation to hope in God even when He's not acting the way we think He should. So how have you been doing with that this week? Have you found your hope in God stretched, strengthened? Has God brought anything into your life this week to sift you, challenge you, test you or encourage you? How has your hope in God been this week?

My aim here is very simple. I come with a burden on my heart to simply drive in the nail that Dan, Dave and John Piper have been graciously pounding into our hearts throughout this month. If you believe in Jesus, if you are trusting in Him, my aim is to persuade you through the testimony of Job that the eternal God of the universe Who created all things, Who holds all things together, is for you. He is actively committed to your good. My aim is that you would leave here believing this truth more deeply, that God will fulfill every gracious purpose of goodness in your life. He's actively doing that even now. I want to persuade you that this is true so that you can say from the depths of your heart, "Though this world with devils fill, should threaten to undue us..." (from A Mighty Fortress is Our God by Martin Luther)...

This I know, that God is for me.
¹⁰ In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise,
¹¹ in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

(Psalm 56:9-11)

I remember when Pastor DeHaan came into Kate's hospital room at St. Joe's in February of 2010. The doctors had not yet arrived at the diagnosis of cancer. It seemed like time was running out. He reminded us that God keeps count of our tossing and turning through the sleepless nights. God knows and sees when we struggle; God puts each tear in His bottle; God writes each ache in His book. Dave encouraged us with these very same words from Psalm 56.

That's what I want to do here. I want you to be persuaded of this truth. You don't believe this as much as God wants you to believe it. You waiver, you doubt. I know because I do too. I realize I don't have the power to persuade you of this. I don't have the power to convince myself of this truth let alone to convince you. If we're really going to believe this, if we're really going to cling to this cornerstone and solid ground that's firm through the fiercest drought and storm, we

must have a persuasion that doesn't come from a man. This persuasion must come originate in the same source from which Job received it. It must come through the supernatural, personal, soul strengthening ministry of the Holy Spirit and He is here. He is here to persuade you that God is for you.

No One in Job's Community is Telling Him God is for Him

I wish I could tell you that once you become a believer in Jesus you will then become connected to a Christian community that is full of people whom you can always trust, people who will always help you believe that God is for you. That's what I long for us to be here. But I can't tell you that. It will be true much of the time. I believe it will be truer within the Christian community than it will be outside but let's be real, it's not always true. I'm so thankful for the comfort, the frequency of encouragement that I receive from this Christian community. God pours out much grace here. But in Job's experience it wasn't true. He wasn't finding the comfort and encouragement in His community. No one was helping him believe that God was for him and it will be true in our lives sometimes, too. Fellow believers will not always be there to help us believe that God is for us. There will be times when we're saying in the words of Wesley:

Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.

(Jesus, Lover of my Soul by Charles Wesley, 1740)

"But this I know, God is for me." If the only way I know that is through the affirmation of other people there will be times when I'm dreadfully tempted to despair. If I depend on human refuge to know this truth I will be up and down. Look at Job. No one in Job's community is telling him that God is for him. He doesn't have a Care Group. No one is making hospital visits to Job. The elders aren't coming to him to administer pastoral care but they're coming to bring church discipline, and not the redemptive kind. He doesn't have anyone clicking "Like" on his Facebook status. All of his followers have unfriended him. Some of them are viciously accusing and taunting him, much like the people who surrounded Jesus' cross. "If God is for Him, let Him come down from there" (Matthew 27:42). No one in Job's community is telling him that God is for him. No one.

Look at Job 19:2-3a: "*How long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have cast reproach upon me.*" He's not adding up the number, he is just giving us a sense that, "Complete reproach is what I've experienced from You." "*Are you not ashamed to wrong me? And even if it be true that I have erred, my error remains with myself.*" In the New Living Translation verse five says, "*You think you're better than I am, using my humiliation as evidence of my sin.*" Oh how careful we have to be when we're flying high and

doing well, but then encounter a believer who is suffering! How careful we have to be not to pass quick judgment; not to assume we're better than they are because of how we're doing compared to how they're doing.

In verse 13, Job starts describing the sense of complete isolation and alienation that he feels God has brought this into his life. Verse 13-16 says:

*¹³ "He has put my brothers far from me,
and those who knew me are wholly estranged from me.
¹⁴ My relatives have failed me,
my close friends have forgotten me.
¹⁵ The guests in my house and my maidservants count me as a
stranger;
I have become a foreigner in their eyes.
¹⁶ I call to my servant, but he gives me no answer;
I must plead with him with my mouth for mercy.*

This is a man who had everything and his servants were at his beck and call. Now he's pressing the intercom button and saying, "Could someone please help me?" and they're all ignoring him. No one is coming to his aid until he is pleading, "Will someone care for my soul?"

Verse 17: some of you might want to turn to your spouse and ask if this is true of you. "My breath is strange to my wife, and I am a stench to the children of my own mother." "My family finds me repulsive."

Verse 18: I find the verse to be one of the most poignant because there is something about little kids, they can come up to the crustiest old man and make him smile and laugh, warming his heart. Little kids have that ability to just encourage and comfort. They're not as judgmental as adults can be. But Job says:

*¹⁸ Even young children despise me;
when I rise they talk against me.
¹⁹ All my intimate friends abhor me,
and those whom I loved have turned against me.*

Oswald Chambers says, "The bitterest hurt in life is to be wounded in the house of your friends; to be wounded by an enemy is bad enough, but it does not take you unawares, you expect it in a measure... [But] in [the] withdrawal of comradeship there is an acuteness of suffering which is difficult to state." How can you describe what it feels like to be hurting and have your closest friends withdraw their support? Not only withdraw their support but actively assail and tackle your belief that God is for you. No one in Job's community is telling him God is for him. What can that feel like? I'm so glad God put this in His Word to show us what that feels like for a believer.

Friends, there are probably people here today who feel the same way. There are probably people here today who wonder, “Is God against me?” They don’t understand and no one is telling them, “God is for you.” No one is coming alongside them and showing them comfort and encouragement. If you feel this way, know that you’re not alone. God wanted you to read these words to know you’re not alone. Other believers have been in that position. Other believers have suffered misunderstanding, alienation, isolation, even from people of God who did not understand what was going on in their lives and no one took the time to listen and care.

If you’re feeling this way and you trust Jesus, I want to tell you today, “God is for you.” God is so for you that He sent His Son into this world to redeem you; He did not send His Son into the world to condemn you (John 3:16-17). He sent His Son into the world to rescue you from your sins. If you will repent of your sin, if you will stop trying to live your life independently of God and if you will turn to Him and not away from Him, you will find God to be with you forever. Nothing will be able to ever separate you from His smile, His favor, His lavish kindness for all eternity. Trust in the Savior God has provided, Jesus Christ, and God will be for you forever. If you are resting and rejoicing in the fact that God is for you, consider that there are people in your life who need your help, and need your support, and who need your encouragement.

Even today during our church picnic, will you merely gravitate toward those with whom you feel most comfortable? That’s fine. That’s good but do you realize that when there is always a group of people who are laughing and enjoying one another there is also another group of people who may be wondering, “Do I fit here? Does anyone care to get to know me? Does anyone know what’s going on in my life?” Be alert for opportunities to convey warmth, acceptance and love from God to someone who might not know a believer who really, really cares for their soul. They don’t have the courage and stamina to reach out to you because maybe there is some private suffering going on in their lives that is so intense it feels suffocating. They need you to come alongside and show them that God is for them, first by your actions, then by your attitude and then by your words. That’s what the body of Christ does. That’s what opportunities like a picnic are for: to create opportunities and relationships where that genuine care can become more and more the norm of what we experience in our life together. May we be striving to be the kind of community where no one is tempted to suspect, “No one cares for my soul here.” God have mercy on us in that regard.

Nothing in Job’s Circumstances Tells Him God is for Him

Not only does no one in Job’s life convey to him that God is for him but secondly, nothing in Job’s circumstances tells him that God is for him. In fact everything in Job’s life is shouting to

the contrary. He feels like God is attacking him. I wish I could tell you that when you become a believer in Jesus you'll be part of this community where you're always going to feel love and kindness, but I can't tell you that. It's not always true. I wish I could tell you that even though it will be difficult at times to trust people, it will always be easy to trust God, but that also is not true. God is always trustworthy but it's not always easy for us to trust Him.

Back in Job 16:9 he was saying things like, "*He has torn me in his wrath and hated me; he has gnashed his teeth at me...*" In verse 12, Job says, "*I was at ease, and he broke me apart, he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces...*" This is so painful to Job because he feels as if he needs God desperately. He loves God deeply but he feels like God is driving him to this cliff of despair.

So look at Job 19:7-12. Job gives a series of vivid pictures of his circumstances: "*Behold, I cry out, 'Violence!' but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice.*" He feels like he's all alone and attacked and that no one is hearing his pleas. He feels like he is being mugged in a city, calling for help, and everyone is just shutting their blinds, not listening. He feels in verse eight like a traveler on a blocked road at night and mobs are surrounding him: "*He has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths.*" In verses nine and ten he feels like God has destroyed his reputation and status in the community. "*He has stripped from me my glory and taken the crown from my head. He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone, and my hope he has pulled up like a tree.*" Remember from last week: "Where then is my hope?" (John 17:15).

A couple of summers ago, a huge windstorm arose on the lake near Kenosha where my parents live. It swooped in and for about three miles along the lakeshore it just picked trees right up from their roots and threw them down to the ground. I ran through there a couple of days after it happened and it was the most devastating sight; it was unspeakable to think about what happened. Then I found out from my cousin that she was actually in one of those parks when the windstorm started. She got into safety just in time but watched these trees just come up from their roots and crash down, destroyed. Job says, "That's what I feel like."

Verse 12 is a pathetic picture: "*His troops come on together; they have cast up their siege ramp against me and encamp around my tent.*" It's like the U.S. Marines are surrounding Job's little pup tent. He's besieged, helpless. He feels like God is attacking him when he most needs Him. He's been waiting. He's been trusting. He's been submitting. He's been wrestling. He's been agonizing. He's been hoping but so far no answer, no relief, no end in sight. Proverbs 13:12 it says, "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.*"

Some of you are in the same place right now. It could be with a son or daughter who is wandering from God. Maybe they have abandoned their faith completely and no one in this room knows the agony you are feeling. You cry out to God. You plead with Him for the heart of a child who does not understand how deeply you love them, or how God loves them. You keep waiting and hoping. I know for some of you that hope has been deferred for years. You might know some of the heartsickness the Bible is speaking of here. It might make you wonder, “Is God for me or is He against me?”

There has been a lot of illness in our church these four years since our merger. There are serious diseases. We’re praying right now for little two-year-old Neal Heinen who will probably have to face chemotherapy for a couple of years. We’re praying for Russ and Elaine, his parents. We don’t know why but we need to help them know—not just today but for months and years down the road—that God is for them.

Think of our fellow believers in Iraq. Can you imagine what it is like to be stranded on a mountainside, your whole community in 110 degree heat? They’re just hoping that somehow the military from a far off country will come and bring some relief. Their children are being taken out of their homes through this cruel and evil onslaught of ISIS. This is the world we live in.

Think of families across the African continent right now, many of whom are believers, who are witnessing the spread of this deadly plague called Ebola.

Think of communities like Ferguson, Missouri where parents are afraid to let their children go outside, not sure if they can trust a system that they feel is stacked against them. And there are communities like that all around us.

When you hear of all the suffering and turmoil, do you want to ignore it, avoid it or blame it on others? Do you hope that somehow you can isolate yourself from it? Does it ever make you wonder, “What is God up to in this world?” Don’t hide behind, “Well, at least it’s not happening to me and to my family.” Someday something will happen in your life and if you are depending on your circumstances to have confidence that God is for you, your faith will be greatly shaken when trials come. If your confidence in God’s advocacy on your behalf is based on something as shallow and as fickle as your own comfortable existence, your faith will be greatly tried.

Do not be surprised by the evil that is in this world. Do not forget that there is an evil one who seeks to work us woe, whose craft and power are great, armed with cruel hate, who seeks to devour, destroy, steal and kill (from *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* by Martin Luther, 1529). Don’t act like that’s just somewhere far away.

Robert Fyall says:

Sometimes God shows such love toward us that we wonder why we ever doubt Him; at other times He seems to turn on us with

such flinty hostility that we wonder why we ever trust Him. In these latter situations God's enemy is masquerading as God and making it appear that God is the Attacker.

(Senior Tutor in Ministry for the Cornhill Training Course, Scotland)

Job did not have the advantage of knowing what we know. Look at what Job says in verses 20-22:

*²⁰ My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh,
and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.
²¹ Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, O you my friends,
for the hand of God has touched me!
²² Why do you, like God, pursue me?
Why are you not satisfied with my flesh?*

But Job is wrong there. What did we read back in Job 2:4-6?

*⁴ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵ But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face."
⁶ And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."*

Whose hand has touched Job? Satan's hand. Christopher Ash is very right and wise in what he says:

The hands and fingers that destroyed Job's possessions and killed Job's children and wrecked Job's health were the hands of...Satan, not the hands of God. Yes, it was the hand of...Satan acting with the permission of the Lord and within the strict constraints given by the Lord; but it was Satan's hand and not God's that actually did these terrible things.

(Job: The Wisdom of the Cross)

The monstrous hands that attacked Job, ripped at him and made his life miserable were not the gracious and compassionate hands of God. The Apostle James tells us that this book was written so that we would know that the Lord is compassionate and gracious (James 5:11). These were the greedy and cruel hands of the enemy, the adversary, the accuser of the saints who masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Job doesn't know this. He doesn't have much place in his theology yet for the role of Satan, probably because not much revelation has been given at this point in redemptive history about the role of Satan. But the spiritual warfare we see being played out in Job's life is but a shadow of the much greater warfare that will be unleashed when the Son of God comes into the world. Then the subtlety of Satan's evil schemes will be revealed with much more clarity.

Job doesn't know any of this. Job doesn't get any help from his community in believing that God is for him and he cannot see any evidence in his circumstances, except to conclude from his circumstances, that God is against him.

And yet this Job knows: God is for Him

That brings us to the third and final point: Job knows that God is for him. Amazing! It's amazing when you read this within its context. There is nothing sappy, shallow or sentimental here. In 19:25, Job says, *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth."*

We love these words that have been set to so many different tunes, including Handel's Messiah. Standing in the face of a God Who seems to be warring against him, Job clings to what he has known in brighter, clearer days. He refuses to forsake in the darkness what God had revealed about Himself in the light.

Look at verses 23-24: *"Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!"* [How wonderfully ironic that we're reading them today.] *"Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!"* Job is pretty sure he is going to die. In fact it's beyond that.

People say there are three stages to sea sickness.

- Stage one: you think you are going to die.
- Stage two: you're sure you're going to die.
- Stage three: you're afraid that you might not die.

Job has reached stage three. Living is more fearful and painful to him than dying. He knows that when he dies his friends aren't going to be satisfied with his flesh (verse 22). They're going to malign him even after death. They're not going to say "rest in peace." They're going to say, "This man got what he deserved. May his soul not rest in peace." He wants his confession to be recorded indelibly, to be remembered forever so that someday when his vindication appears, they will see that he knew, "God is for me. In God, Whose Word I praise, in God I trust." That was Job's confession.

How does Job hold onto this confidence that God is for him even when everything inside and outside is shouting, "God is against you"? It's because Job knows there is a Redeemer. We've been getting hints of this longing for a Mediator in chapter nine and again in chapter 16. The more Job talks about him the more this hope rises in his heart. He can't shake it off.

The Hebrew term *go'el*—redeemer—is someone who stands for you when you have been wronged. If you are murdered, it's his duty to see to it that your murderer is punished. If your

inheritance is jeopardized, it's his duty to safeguard it. If your widowed wife is left childless, it's his duty to give her a child and to carry on your name. A redeemer is someone who stands up for you when you are powerless to stand up for yourself. He is your vindicator. He is your champion. He is the one who will cross the world to buy you out of slavery and bondage.

Our Redeemer—Jesus Christ—is the One Who will come from heaven to earth to rescue us from our sins and deliver us from the evil world in which we live. He is the One Who comes into this world to destroy the works of the devil. Our Redeemer is the One Who will soon crush Satan under His feet. Job says, “I know I have a Redeemer and He lives! He is alive forever! *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.”*”

Upon the dust of Job's grave, Christ will stand and will trample under His feet all of the evil and hostile forces that were arrayed against Job. And we have that hope as well.

This week I was in a place where we sang, “A Mighty Fortress is our God.” Oh, those words were so precious to me!

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

But then Luther goes on to say:

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth (the Lord of heaven's host, the Lord of all the armies of
heaven) His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

(A Mighty Fortress is our God, Martin Luther, 1529)

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last He will stand upon the earth.”

Job goes on to say, “I will see Him face to face. I don't know how that's going to happen but I know I'm going to see Him.” And the whole logic of the gospel and resurrection is contained in Job's words in verses 26-27:

²⁶ *And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷ whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!*

I will glory in my Redeemer
Who carries me on eagles' wings
He crowns my life with loving kindness

His triumph song I'll ever sing
I will glory in my Redeemer
Who waits for me at gates of gold
And when He calls me, it will be paradise
His face forever to behold

(I Will Glory in My Redeemer, Steve & Vicki Cook)

This is how I know that God is for me. There is a Redeemer. He is my Redeemer. He lives. He's coming again. He is going to raise me from the dust. He is going to defend me He is going to clothe me in His righteousness. He is going to vindicate me as belonging to Him. He is going to destroy all the hostile forces that have been arrayed against me. And I am going to behold His face forever!

John Newton says, "If we are not getting much out of going to God in prayer, we will certainly get nothing out of staying away." Have you been staying away from God because you're wondering, "Is He for me or against me?" As we pray here quietly for a minute I want you to engage with God because the good things we've been hearing this month about a God Who crushes death, about a God Who gives resurrection life, about a God Who gives us an everlasting hope, these things can only penetrate our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to seal these truths in our hearts. So we need to pray, not just go through the motions.

What is tempting you to doubt that God is for you? Would you talk to Him about that for a minute? Maybe you're disappointed in other people and that's caused you, instead of gazing at God, to become discouraged and disheartened? Would you give that over to God and redirect your gaze to your living Redeemer Who is for you? How is the enemy of your soul raging in your life right now? Would you express your confidence in your Champion, your Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

(A Mighty Fortress is our God, Martin Luther, 1529)

Jesus! Jesus! Express your confidence in Him to give you victory over the powers of darkness. Express your need for Him to do that. Thank God that if you trust in Jesus you can say, "The right man is on my side."

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