



MT. ROSE REFORMED
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Job's Easter Hope

Reverend Scott Johnson | April 5, 2026 | Job 19:21-27

Old Testament Reading

Our Old Testament reading and our sermon text this morning is Job chapter 19, verses 21 through 27. And this is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible word. Let's hear the word of God. Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me. Why do you, like God, pursue me? Why are you not satisfied with my flesh? Oh, that my words were written. Oh, that they were inscribed in a book. Oh, that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh, I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me.

New Testament Reading

You can keep your place there and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 for our New Testament reading. 1 Corinthians 15 verses 12 through 22. So 1 Corinthians 15, 12 through 22. Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile

and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God endures forever.

The Joy and Meaning of Easter

When I was a kid, I loved Easter. Of course, for me at that time, Easter had absolutely nothing to do with Jesus or the resurrection, but I loved Easter baskets full of candy and chocolate bunnies and Easter egg hunts and all of that. But when I came to faith in Christ as a young adult, I came to love Easter for much better reasons. I loved hearing about the empty tomb, the resurrection of Christ, singing the great Easter hymns, greeting others with "He is risen." I do love our Easter breakfast too before the congregation, before our worship. So that's another reason to love Easter.

There are countless reasons why as Christians we should rejoice and celebrate that glorious day when our Lord Jesus emerged from the tomb. One reason we should love Easter is because the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that our faith and hope as Christians are not in vain, that all that we do as believers in Christ, all that we live for as Christians is not in vain. The empty tomb is the guarantee that what we believe is true, that we are truly serving the living Lord Jesus.

As we heard in our New Testament reading from 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says, if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still on your sins. But praise the Lord, that is not the case. The tomb that contained Jesus for those three days, it was empty on that Easter morning, it is still empty today. Paul says, in fact, in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. The tomb is empty, and one day the whole world will know what we now know by faith, and that is Jesus Christ. He is the true, the living Lord of lords, King of kings. He is the savior of all who come to him in faith. So praise God for the resurrection of Jesus.

Another reason why we should love Easter is because the empty tomb reminds us that in the face of the suffering and death, the suffering and death that we must all endure in this world, the greatest hope that God gives to us is this, the promise of our own resurrection, our own resurrection from death to life on that great day when the Lord Jesus will come again into our world. In fact, this resurrection hope has always been the hope of God's people. Even in the Old Testament, before the coming of Christ, there were hints, prophecies, promises that God's ultimate purpose for his people was to raise up their dead bodies from their graves to new bodily life forever and ever.

To give just one example of how the Old Testament saints also hoped in the resurrection, listen to the words from Isaiah the prophet. He declared to the people of Israel, your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise, you who dwell in the dust awake and sing for joy, for your dew is a dew of light and the earth will give birth to the dead. In fact, we find this resurrection hope in one of the most unlikely places in all of the Old Testament, and that is in the book of Job.

So much of the book of Job is taken up with Job's lament of the incredible suffering that he endured. The grief and the pain so overwhelmed Job because of his suffering that he even longed to die. And so often when we read Job, we are struck with Job's, what seems to be his complete despair, his hopelessness in the face of his suffering. And so many of the passages in Job are very dark and grim, but like a single shaft of brilliant sunshine piercing through the dark clouds of a storm, Job in the midst of his suffering and despair, he declares a hope that we now recognize as the hope of his own bodily resurrection to new life in the presence of God forever. Job's hope was an Easter hope. And that will be our subject this morning as we look at this passage from Job. First, we'll consider the suffering of Job. Then we'll consider the hope of Job. And thirdly, we'll consider what I'll call the greater Job.

The Suffering of Job

So first, the suffering of Job. If you're at all familiar with the book of Job, you know how he was afflicted with tragedy upon tragedy. He was filled with pain, with misery, with anguish. We won't get into the background of Job's suffering, but the author of Job tells us that God, for his own holy, wise, inscrutable purposes, he allowed the evil one to afflict Job. He allowed Satan to, afflicted Job with wave after wave of calamities.

First of all, a band of Sabeans stole all of Job's oxen and donkeys and slaughtered some of his servants. And then fire came down from heaven and incinerated all of Job's sheep and killed more of his servants. And after that, a raiding band of Chaldeans stole all of Job's camels and killed yet more of Job's servants. And even as the news of these disasters was still ringing in the ears of Job, the most devastating news of all came to him. And that is a great wind destroyed the house of his eldest son. All 10 of his children were in the house and all 10 of his children were dead.

And then the evil one was allowed to destroy Job's health. He was afflicted from head to toe with loathsome sores, sores for which all he could do was sit in a pile of ashes and scrape himself with a shard of pottery. And on top of all of that, Job's wife encouraged Job, I should put that in quotation marks, encouraged Job with this inspiring counsel, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." Thank you, Mrs. Job, for those uplifting words. I'm sure Job was very happy to hear those.

And if all of that wasn't enough to overwhelm Job with grief and misery, his three good friends traveled all the way from foreign lands to take turns lecturing Job on what a terrible and unrepentant sinner he was. And in the midst of all of that, the night that may have plunged deepest into the heart of Job was the utter silence of God. Job longed for his innocence, his integrity, his righteousness to be vindicated by God. But up until the very end of Job, there was nothing but silence from heaven. No wonder Job cursed the day of his birth. In chapter three, he says, let that day perish on which I was born and the night that said a man is conceived. Let that day be darkness. May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. Job would rather not have lived at all than to have lived and suffered all that he suffered.

Now, none of us here will ever suffer the way that Job did, but by the same token, none of us will escape suffering in this life. To live in this fallen world is to experience pain, heartache, sorrow, loss, and misery. It may be the death of a loved one. It may be a disease or the loss of property. It may be the hurt and the pain that is caused by others, or the betrayal of a friend, or the shattering of your dreams and hopes in this world in one way or another, we all suffer trouble and affliction in this life. And what's more, even when we enjoy good times, even when we bask in the sunshine of God's smiling providence and enjoy pleasant and enjoyable times in this world, even so the storm clouds of our own mortality are always gathering on the horizon. And each one of our lives, whether they are long or short, each one ends in that greatest trial of all that confronts us, and that is our own death.

And so Job is kind of like a mirror for us. His suffering is extreme, but we see in his suffering the unpleasant but inescapable reality that to some degree we must all suffer in this world that is cursed by sin and death. By the time we get to chapter 19 in Job, Job seems defeated, resigned, without hope. As one person said, there was a feeling of sadness that pervades everything that Job says in this chapter, at least the first part of the chapter. He speaks of how his three friends have only tormented him. God seems to be his enemy. His other friends and family have failed him and forgotten him. Even young children despise Job and slander him. His body is still ravaged with these loathsome sores. He is a man in despair. He is a man who has lost hope. In fact, he says in verse 10, speaking about God, "my hope has he pulled up like a tree." God has taken all hope away from me, Job says.

In verse 21, Job no longer tries to argue with his friends. Instead, he just begs them for mercy. He says, have mercy on me. Have mercy on me, O you, my friends, for the hand of God has touched me. And in verse 22, his anguished cry to his friends is, why are you still teaming up with God and persecuting me? Have you not yet had your fill of my flesh? Haven't you already eaten me up enough?

And that leads Job to express his deepest longing in all the midst of his suffering. The thing that he wanted most of all was that he would be vindicated, that his innocence, his righteousness would be shown to be true, that the whole world would know that it was not his own sin as his friends accused him. It was not his own sin that brought all of this suffering upon him. And so in verse 23, he wishes, he longs that the truth of all that he has said concerning his own integrity, that those words would be written in a book so that even if his generation didn't acknowledge it, at least future generations would acknowledge that Job was a righteous man. But that leads him to say in verse 24, better yet, don't write in a book, a book will perish with time, but inscribe my words on something that will last. Engrave them in a rock with an iron pin and lead so that they will testify to my integrity forever.

Little did Job know that he would get something much better. His words would be included in the Holy Scriptures, which are far more enduring, eternally enduring, but far more permanent than even words inscribed in a rock. And then we come to verses 25 and 26. And these are the greatest words in all the book of Job. Because here, by some miracle of faith, when all seems hopeless, Job takes hold of the promise of God that not only will God himself vindicate him, but he will vindicate him and restore him in the most wonderful way possible. And that is Job will be raised from the dust of death to resurrection glory.

The Hope of Job

And that was the hope of Job. He says in verse 25, "for I know, I know that my Redeemer lives." This is Job's profession of faith. He knows that he has a Redeemer. He knows that he has a savior and he knows that he lives because his Redeemer is none other than God himself. And Job goes on to say in verse 25, "and at the last he will stand upon the earth." His Redeemer will stand, which probably means here in this context that God will stand as though He were taking a stand in a court of law, as though He were bearing witness and testifying to all of creation that Job is righteous, that Job is and forever will be a true man of God.

Depending on your version of the Bible, you'll notice that there is a footnote after the word earth. The Hebrew word there literally means dust. And as it often means in the book of Job, dust most likely here refers not to the ground or the earth, but it means the dust of the grave. It refers to the dust to which all bodies, including Job's, must return to after death. And so Job sees that somehow his vindication from God, his redeemer, will take place at his grave.

And then Job's hope reaches even higher. He says in verses 26 and 27, "and after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and my eye shall behold and not another." Now the Hebrew here, the original language of this passage, the Hebrew, it is notoriously difficult to translate. By the way, if you feel like in your life you don't have enough suffering, study Hebrew and your misery index will go up a few notches, I promise. And so the Hebrew here is a little unclear, but in our English versions, our English versions faithfully capture the sense of what these verses are saying.

In some way after death, Job will behold with his very eyes, his redeemer, who was God himself. But because the Hebrew is difficult to read in different ways, it can be read in different ways. Some people have suggested that Job's hope here is that he will see God in some kind of disembodied state. In other words, that it will be Job's spirit that beholds God. Again, you may have in your Bible a footnote that says that "in my flesh" can be translated "without my flesh." Literally, it's "from my flesh." However, Job does say, "my eyes shall behold his divine Redeemer." That certainly implies that Job will have a body with eyes.

But more importantly than that, when we read the words of Job here, when we read his hope in the context of the Old Testament, in the context of the Old Testament hope of resurrection, and especially when we read Job's words here in the context of the New Testament promises of

resurrection, then we can confidently say that Job's hope here was not that his body would remain in the dust forever, but his hope was that when his Redeemer stood by his grave, he would also raise up Job in a new body, so that truly in his flesh, in his renewed flesh, in his raised flesh, with his very eyes, Job would behold his Redeemer, the Lord God.

And this has been the understanding of the church from the earliest days, that Job's hope was an Easter hope. He grasped by faith, for a moment at least, and however indistinctly it may have been, Job did grasp the glorious truth that on that last day, God would raise him up from the grave in a body that is imperishable, incorruptible, immortal. In other words, Job proclaims a hope here that can only find its fullest meaning in his resurrection from the dead.

And there is a remarkable detail at the very end of the book of Job that I believe confirms Job's hope in the resurrection. In the very last paragraph of all the book of Job, we read that the Lord restored to Job everything that he had lost. In Job 42:12, we read this: "And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys." Verse 13 says, "he had also seven sons and three daughters." And what's very interesting about those two verses is that Job gave twice as many sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys than he had before all of his suffering began. However, God gave him the same number of children that he had earlier before they died, that is 10 children, seven sons and three daughters.

When I was in the process of becoming a pastor, I had to take all kinds of exams with my presbytery, Hebrew and Greek, church history, apologetics, theology, and so on. And one of the exams that I had to take was an English Bible exam. Just because you go to seminary doesn't mean that you necessarily know the English Bible all that well. And the last question on the English Bible exam was something like this: Why did God not give Job twice as many children at the end of the book when he gave him twice as many livestock? I had no idea what the answer to that question was supposed to be, so I left it blank. I did pass the test, but when the minister graded the test, he sent it back to me and he wrote out the answer for me. He said, the reason was because Job would receive his first 10 children back in the resurrection. And so in that way, his children would be doubled. And I believe that was Job's hope.

You may know that when the composer, George Friedrich Handel, when he wrote his magnum opus, The Messiah, he actually meant that to be a piece or a work to be performed for Easter, not for Christmas. Of course, traditionally we hear and sing The Messiah at Christmas. What I

didn't know about The Messiah is that Handel did not write the lyrics to it. He had someone else put the words to the music. That person's name was Charles Jennings. And Jennings was absolutely correct, both biblically and theologically, when in one of the songs in the Messiah, he joins the words of Job with the words from 1 Corinthians 15. So I'll just read what that song says: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." And so that's from Job. "And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." That's from Job. And then from 1 Corinthians: "For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

As a believer in Jesus Christ, the hope of Job, Job's Easter hope, this is your hope as well. This is your hope in the face of the suffering and the death that confronts all of us, that we all must experience in this fallen world. God does not promise you that he will heal you from your sickness. He does not promise you that he will take away disease from you. God does not promise you that he will give you better circumstances or a better life, that he will take away whatever afflicts you. God does not promise you that he will deliver you from all the different ways that you suffer in this world. But God does make this promise to you, that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, he will raise you up in a new body. He will raise you from death to life in a new body that is free from suffering and pain forever. He will give you everlasting life in a new world, a new world in which there will be no more pain and suffering and death forever and ever. This is your hope as a believer. This is your hope in the resurrection, the same hope that Job had. And the certainty, the infallibility of that hope is grounded in the very thing that we are celebrating today, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Job - A Picture of Christ

In his own way, Job gives us a picture of the Christ who is still yet to come. Job was a righteous man, just like Jesus. He suffered the attacks of Satan, like Jesus. He was mocked and mistreated like Jesus. He prayed for his enemies like Jesus. And in that way, he became a mediator between God and sinners like Jesus. And in the end, Job was vindicated by God like Jesus.

But unlike with Jesus, in the final words of the book of Job, we read nothing about his resurrection from the dead, but we read only of his death. The very last verse of the book of Job says this, "and Job died, an old man and full of days." It doesn't say, "and Job lived happily ever

after," but it says, "and Job died." There's an ancient hymn in the church from the fourth century that says something like this, "Christ conquered death where Job could not."

Job was a man of faith. By the grace of God, he proved himself to be patient and faithful to the Lord in all that he suffered, but even with his faith, he could not overcome death. It would take the greater Job. It would take the suffering of the greater Job to overcome death for us. And in the most wonderful and unexpected and mysterious way, the Lord Jesus Christ defeated death by willingly succumbing himself to death. The death that Jesus died on the cross was the death of death itself. And so by the suffering of the greater Job, he did what Job could not do by his suffering. He has brought death to death. He has overcome the grave forever.

And Jesus did so, not for himself, but he did so for you and me, for guilty and sinful people like you and me. And if your faith and trust are in Jesus Christ, He died the death that you deserved. He suffered the wrath, the judgment of God that you deserved. And if your hope is in Jesus Christ, you are free from that death. Your sins are forgiven because Jesus died for you on the cross. And in his death, he conquered sin and death and hell and Satan for you, for your salvation. And when Jesus rose from the dead, when he emerged from that tomb alive, he emerged as the victor, the conqueror over Satan, sin, death and hell forever and ever for you. He is the triumphant Lord who has brought you eternal life and has conquered the grave for you.

And so the hope of Job is your hope. The resurrection of your body on the last day. And this is guaranteed. This is certain. Not only because God promises it in his word, but it is certain because the tomb of Jesus is empty. Because Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead to new life. And one day, because of that one day, your grave, wherever your body ends up, after you die, your grave, one day, will be as empty as the tomb of Jesus is today.

So what is Easter to you? What do you love about Easter? Is it all about your Easter traditions at home or the coming of spring, getting dressed up for church? Not that any of those things are wrong, but does Easter mean more to you than that? Is Easter the source of your hope as a sinful, suffering mortal who must one day succumb to death? Do you look to the resurrection of Christ or the empty tomb as the source of your hope?

Put your trust and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. Put your trust in the one who was crucified for you, who was resurrected for you, who is the savior from sin and death so that you can say with Job, "I know that my redeemer lives and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my

skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eye shall behold, and not another." Let's pray.