

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY JULY 14, 2019

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"But, I Am Still Here!"

Based on Job 19:1-27

If ever there was a man who had the right to complain about the troubles of life, it would be Job. If something could go wrong in Job's life, it did. But his story was not as simple as an "Oh, woe is me," tale, or of an accident prone buffoon. Job was caught in a life and death struggle between God and the dark shadows, which lurk near each of us. His story hits more closely to home, than most of us would like to admit.

Job was 'the' man about town. He had money, land, property, servants, slaves, animals, RRSP's, Tax Free Savings accounts, Limited Partnerships, and Dividend Bearing Stocks from Proctor & Gamble. He was set. Job was also a faithful man at the temple and took his time with God seriously.

This is where the trouble set in. Job caught the attention of the darker side, who claimed that if he were not surrounded by all these good things of life, his faith would waver, teeter on the edge of sanity, and inevitably, fall. The Lord said, "Bring it on!"

Unbeknownst to Job, his life and his faith were now wrapped in the ultimate challenge between light and darkness.

I KNOW THAT MY
REDEEMER LIVES,
AND THAT IN
THE END HE WILL
STAND ON THE
EARTH.

~JOB 19:25

First, the obvious things were taken away. The stock market crashed, his bank was robbed, and his lawyer took off with all his investments.

"But, I am still here," said Job.

There was a hail storm which destroyed his crops in the fields, and a great fire that burned his barns and family home to the ground.

"But, I Am Still Here," said Job.

Illness and plague swept through the village and his children died in his arms. His wife, could not handle the grief and disappeared within

herself in great despair. Job was terribly shaken by all this, but gritted his teeth and said quietly,

"I am still here."

Job's story was so overwhelmingly sad, that friends began to avoid him, for fear of bad luck catching up with them as well. No one visited anymore, sent cards, brought a bowl of soup, or listened to him cry. Through tears, in a voice that either came from deep grief, or unquenched anger, he would shake a fist in the air and shout out,

"I am still here."

Job fell into a time of great depression. He did not eat. He did not sleep. He became sick and kept the curtains drawn in the little hovel he now called home. A few new friends arrived on the scene and encouraged Job with comments like, "Why bother...It's hopeless...Give up!" With friends like that, who needed enemies?

"But, I am still here," whispered Job.

Job could not understand why all this had happened to him. He replayed his life time and time again, to see where he had failed: his family, his

responsibilities, his God. With nothing left to discover, no place to go to, no one to ask, he raged at God Himself: "Why? What have I done? Why do you take all this from me? How have I failed you?"

"How long will you torment me?" (Job 19:1)

"Because, I am still here!"

Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my Redeemer lives (v23-25a)

We are all Job's, of one sort or another. Each of us has a combination of cars and clothes, trips and tasks, people and problems, that makes up our little corner of the world. We try not to think about how tenuous this life we have wrapped around ourselves really is. We are unsure of what we would do if some of the pieces of the fragile bubble we protect ourselves with, might shatter or crack. We avoid thinking about or reading about other's tragedies, because the little voice inside reminds us that someone else's story could very easily be ours.

So where does God, salvation and faith fit in to all this?

- When life begins to go sideways, where is God?

- When the things of comfort are removed, where is God?
- When the people who are important to you disappear, where is God?
- When the storms of life are truly 'raging', do you cling to God until it passes?

In your darkest moments, can you, like Job, still say, *I know that my Redeemer lives! (v25a)*

Don't turn away now. Because that word Redeemer is more than just a line used in Handel's "Messiah." Other translations replace with word 'Redeemer' with others like: Avenger, Vindicator, Saviour, Defender, The Last.

My friends, when like Job, and our legs begin to weaken, and weariness clouds our clarity of thinking; when suffering and loss consume our heart; when we are lost in the storms of life...

- When we need a superhero...we have an Avenger
- When we need justice...we have a Vindicator
- When we need to hear God's whispers...we have a Saviour
- When we are afraid...we have a Defender

- When we need forgiveness...we have a Redeemer

And when this life is finished, and the next is to begin...

- Alone or with loved ones gathered,
- Surrounded by the creature comforts of home, or in simple cot looking heavenward
- We have Someone at The Last.

Knowing that, is what allowed Job to claim to his God, over and over again, no matter what life threw at him, or took from him,

"I am still here!"

Job had everything, and then Job had nothing.

Most of us are somewhere between those two extremes. Where ever it is that you sit between something and nothing,

Can you say with a clear voice: "I know my Redeemer lives!"

Can you look at your God and say?

"I am still here!"