

**Easter Sunday: 9:30 Service: April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Theme: What Comfort I Have! I Know That My Redeemer Lives!

Christ is Arisen! He is Arisen indeed, Alleluia! Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text for this morning comes from Job 19, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.” This is our text.

These words from Job this morning inspired a very familiar hymn written by Samuel Medley in the 1700s. This hymn has been sung numerous times and for many occasions in the past 300 years, and we just sang it as our Sermon Hymn, I Know That My Redeemer Lives. I am sure that everyone here has a special memory attributed to this hymn. I know many cannot sing this hymn without shedding a tear. This hymn is a great proclamation of our text from Job.

As we loudly sing the words from the hymn, what in fact do we say? “I know that my redeemer lives; what comfort this sweet sentence gives! He lives, He lives, who once was dead; He lives my, ever living head.”<sup>1</sup> What comfort this gives us sinners. This hymn is sung a lot of times at funerals. There we are reminded of the realities of death. Death comes after us all, from the elderly to the very young, death stalks us from the moment we enter into the world. The effects of sin and death on our bodies is an ever present reality. As we age, things do not work as well as they should. We get sick and disease threatens us from very early in our lives. Death threatens life in every form. From the plants to the animals to babies in the womb to the aged persons, death attacks life. We are reminded of death and the darkness of sin these last few weeks as Satan drove many into such darkness that the only way they saw out was to take their own life. What despair we see in the world today, as Satan focuses the mind on such darkness and to convince us that death is natural.

There are many today who in fact say death is a natural thing. They say it is just natural for the body to die. Just because we will all die, does that make it natural? If death is natural, then why does the body fight it so? If death were natural, than why does our body fight off infection and diseases, why does it fight off these elements of death while we are still alive? Death is not a natural thing. Death is a result of sin. St. Paul tells us that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We all sin, and if you want to believe that you are not a sinner and I would ask you simply one question, “Are you going to die one day?” If your answer is “yes,” than you are a sinner. Because you are a sinner, you have failed to live and failed to be perfect in the eyes of God. Because you are a sinner, you deserve nothing but punishment and eternal death. Your sin separates you from God.

Our sin leaves us in fear. There is tears and troubled hearts, fainting and complaining. Our human condition is indeed a sinful one. So where is our comfort? Our comfort is found precisely in these words from Job, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.” Jesus Christ come to earth and became man. Being human, He knew He had to die. Being God, He was able to keep the Law perfectly for us. Being human, He was able to die on our behalf. When we began this week, we began with much rejoicing as our King entered into Jerusalem. As we continued through the week, we heard many teachings from Christ and we saw a short glimpse of how life is lived.

As we celebrate Holy Week, we see a cliff notes version of life. It starts with rejoicing, as a new life is brought into the world. As we continue towards the cross on Good Friday, there are many things that take place. Jesus teaches His disciples, and us many things. As we journey to death, we live our lives in the middle of Holy Week with each other. There is happiness and sadness, joy and lamenting. We help, exhort, and live together as Children of the heavenly Father.

On Maundy Thursday we celebrated the Lord’s Supper. We are fed and sustained until our time on the cross through Christ Body and Blood. We heard His many teachings in the upper room. We are fed with His word,

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<sup>1</sup> LSB 461:1

fed with His body and blood. Forgiven of our sins and exhorted to live together as a family; a family with Christ as our Head.

On Good Friday, we come to death. As Christ died, so will we. Christ suffered and died, we too will suffer and die. As Christ rested in the tomb, we too will rest in the tomb. But our journey does not end there either. Because of Christ's death, our journey continues on to Easter Sunday, to today! We proclaim with Job, I Know that My Redeemer Lives! As Christ was resurrected from the dead, we know, believe, teach and confess that we too will one day rise. "He lives and grants me daily breath; He lives and I shall conquer death; He lives my mansion to prepare; He lives to bring me safely there."<sup>2</sup> In these words from our Hymn we sing of how everything we have is from God.

Because He lives, because He is resurrected, we too shall conquer death. Will we still die? Yes. Are we still sinners? Yes. But Christ bore the punishment for us. He died for us and He rose for us. He lives and prepares a mansion for us in heaven. He not only prepares it for us, but He lives to bring me safely there. He leads us through the valley of the shadow of death into the glorious pasture of His Resurrection. Through His death and resurrection the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians speak to us. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> Through the Blood shed on Good Friday and the Victorious rising on that first Easter morning, that Victory is ours!

While we live here on earth, in this sinful bodies, there will be fear, troubles, pain, disease, sickness and death. Because our Redeemer Lives, because we know that at the last He will stand upon the earth, we proclaim, "He lives to silence all my fears; He lives to wipe away my tears; He lives to calm my troubled heart; He lives all blessings to impart."<sup>4</sup> The blessings of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation He gives to us each individually. Our Heavenly Father knows each and everyone of us by name. In Holy Baptism He called each you by name and declared you to be His Child. On the last day, He calls you by name just as He did with Lazarus. He calls you family, as He speaks about His brothers in our Gospel Lesson. The Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name. They hear Him and know His voice.

With Job, we are joyous this Easter morning. Our Lord and Savior, our Good Shepherd, our King lives! "He lives, all glory to His name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same; Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives; I know that my Redeemer lives!"<sup>5</sup> Amen.

Now may the peace of God, which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> LSB 461:7

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

<sup>4</sup> LSB 461:5

<sup>5</sup> LSB 461:8