

Sermon

Hopeful Action on Behalf of the Gospel

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Good morning, beloved. Today, we turn to one of the most profound and challenging books in all of Scripture—the Book of Job. It’s not a story of triumph in the traditional sense. It’s a story of loss, of suffering, of silence from heaven. And yet, it is also a story of unwavering faith, of deep wrestling, and ultimately, of restoration.

“For I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God.”

Now let’s gather some context for this statement – Job has lost everything family, money, his livelihood, friends and his health. And now the weight of all he has experienced is manifesting in his body. He is skin and bones, his flesh is rotting and his physical body is dying. He has been at odds with God through all of this – feeling as though God is not listening because, well, his suffering continues...relentlessly.

It is not in human nature, not in our nature, to have a life without some sort of a plan, of some kind of direction. From a young age, we are encouraged to pursue interests, education and a vocational path long before we have truly experienced life. Our linear mindset is put in place and from that point forward, for most anxiety becomes a normal part of our makeup.

Inspired by [workingpreacher.org](https://www.workingpreacher.org) commentary on Job 19: 23-27 by Rev Anna Marsh and commentary on Luke 20:27-38 by Rev Kendra A. Mohn.

We worry about our finances, we struggle with wondering how to move forward at times, the world changes and we don't know how to interpret how to live. Things like war, a pandemic, and financial changes in the world make it truly impossible for us to have any true control over our very lives. Yet we try, yet we plan, yet we wonder...like Job, where is God in my struggle.

Job's words are not just of faith – they are spoken to a God who has remained silent through all of his suffering and pain. Job felt the need to speak these words as part of the public record “O that my words were written down!” Remembering at this time, there was not pen and paper. His witness, his bearing of his soul is all that is left for him to do.

You know what's remarkable about Job? Even in the middle of his suffering, he doesn't let go of the idea that justice matters. He still believes that redemption is coming—he just doesn't know how or when or from where. At this point in the story, it's almost like Job isn't even talking to God anymore. He's talking around God, maybe even trying to wake God up. As if to say, “Hey, remember redemption? Because I do. And I'm not seeing it anywhere.”

Now, I don't think this is the big, triumphant burst of faith we sometimes make it out to be. I think we want it to be that—because we're uncomfortable with unresolved tension. We want closure. But Job doesn't give us that, at least not right away. And we've got to let the text speak for itself, even when it doesn't say what we wish it would.

This is part of the challenge of believing in one God. There's nowhere else to go. No backup plan. No second opinion. We get a God who is all-

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powerful—but also deeply mysterious. And when someone's hurting, the answer isn't just "Hang on, you'll see." That's not enough.

Eventually, redemption does come for Job. And yes, it shows up in restored health, wealth, and relationships. But before any of that, it comes in the form of something deeper: God says to Job, "You spoke rightly of me." All those raw, messy, emotional things Job said about himself and about God? God says, "I heard you." And all the polished, religious-sounding advice from his friends? God says, "You need Job to pray for you."

That's powerful. That's personal. That's a God who doesn't just reward piety—He honors honesty.

Now, let's take that same hunger for truth—the same wrestling with mystery—and turn to Jesus in Luke 20.

In this passage, Jesus is approached by the Sadducees, a group that didn't believe in resurrection. They try to trap Him with a hypothetical question about marriage in the afterlife. But Jesus doesn't take the bait. Instead, He lifts the conversation to a higher plane.

He says, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive."

That's the kind of clarity Job longed for. That's the kind of hope he clung to, even when he couldn't see it. Job believed redemption would come, even if he didn't know how. And here, Jesus confirms it: resurrection is real, and God's justice doesn't end at the grave.

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So if Job teaches us how to hold on in the dark, Jesus shows us what we're holding on for. Not just restoration—but resurrection. Not just answers—but eternal life.

Let's look closer at how Jesus reframes the question, and what that means for our faith today.

Let's be honest—how much of our lives do we spend afraid of what's coming next? Fear of losing a job. Fear of losing someone we love. Fear of our bodies breaking down. And underneath all of it, there's one central fear that ties it all together: death.

We fear death. We do everything we can to delay it, to avoid thinking about it, to push it off as far as possible. But in Luke 20, Jesus invites us to imagine something radically different. He's not just answering a tricky question from the Sadducees—He's painting a picture of a new kind of existence. One where we're no longer bound by the limits of this world. No more gravity. No more sickness. No more suffering. Not even the structures we cling to—like marriage—define us anymore.

Jesus is asking us to imagine what it means to be truly free. To be children of God in the fullest sense. Equal. Loved. Whole.

So let me ask you—what would your life look like if you weren't afraid of death? Really think about that. There are people who live that way. But it's not just about courage—it's about love. Love for creation. Love for every child of God. Love for yourself. Because this eternal life Jesus speaks of? It's not just

something we earn. It's something we're invited into. Something we're meant for.

Leaning into the resurrection in a true belief allows for a new way of approaching life. It provides glimpses of a community where all are welcomed and there is enough, articulates the value of each human being, and gives other sources of motivation for action than simply fear or protection.

One of the most beautiful parts of the good news is this: when we truly encounter the kind of hope Jesus offers—even if it's just for a fleeting moment—it has the power to shift everything. That deep, soul-level fear we've carried for so long? It begins to loosen its grip. It fades into the background. It stops being the loudest voice in the room.

Hope doesn't just comfort us—it reorders our reality. It rewrites the story we tell ourselves. Suddenly, the fear that once dominated our thoughts and decisions no longer feels like the final word. We remember that we are held, that we are loved, and that we are destined for something greater than the pain of this present moment.

And once we've tasted that kind of hope, even briefly, it leaves a mark. It becomes a reference point—a light we can return to when the shadows creep in. Because now we know what's possible. We've seen that fear doesn't have to win. And that changes everything.

Jesus is calling us to imagine what it is like to live without the fear of death so that we can approach our lives differently. If all of this is true, if through Jesus we are all children of the resurrection, then how does that free us? How do we spend our time? Our money? Our energy?

While I may not look like Job on the outside, I assure you that I have had many more days than I care to admit, living in fear of what is next, of the unknown, of what may come. I feel like Job in those moments and barely hold it together at times. Maybe you can relate? And yet, something in my core reminds me to listen and see. Reminds me to hear your words, the faithful, the believers, the knowers of truth -and leads me back to peace and grace.

If you're carrying something heavy today—grief, fear, uncertainty—hear this: Jesus is inviting you into a new way of being. He's not asking you to carry it alone. He's already lifting you, drawing you into His salvation, into an eternity shaped by love.

So just for a moment, let that truth wrap around you. Let it settle into your bones. Feel the presence of love in this space—yes, even through this screen. There's something sacred happening here. A holy connection. A reminder that you are not alone.

And when we begin to live from that place—from the assurance that we are held and loved—we find ourselves free. Free from the weight of anxiety over what we can't control. Free to use our energy for something greater: to live out the gospel with courage, with compassion, with joy.

Because when fear no longer drives us, love can lead us. And when love leads, the possibilities are endless.

So as we go from this moment, may you carry with you the peace that comes from knowing you are seen, known, and deeply loved by God. May that peace give you strength to act, to serve, to hope. And may your life become a reflection of the resurrection promise—that even in the face of death, love wins.

Amen.