

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

Sermon Series on the Book of Job
Week 3
June 21, 2020



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- **Prelude** “Somebody Bigger Than You and I; These Hands;
Mansion Over the Hilltop; Pass It On” Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome** Pr Mel

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
 2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
 3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
 Son of God and gra-cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
 Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
 on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
 Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
 Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
 For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

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 - Please be seated

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: We are tempted to be thankful only when things are going well for us. We are tempted to take credit for all that is good in our lives. We conveniently forget that all things come from you. Forgive us for being shortsighted, arrogant and thoughtless. Cleanse our hearts and bring us back to your side, for you are all that we truly need.

P: God hears our repentance and answers our request for forgiveness. Receive the assurance of your creator's mercy and return to the loving embrace of the one who made, loved, and redeemed you. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

*** GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Eternal God, You have given us an unfailing promise: the gift of everlasting life for all who believe. Sustain us with this assurance, that hope might shine out of all we do for the sake of Jesus our Lord,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Job 14:7-15; 19:23-27

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is selected verses from the book of Job, chapters 14 and 19.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

⁷“For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. ⁸Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, ⁹yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant. ¹⁰But mortals die, and are laid low; humans expire, and where are they? ¹¹As waters fail from a lake, and a river wastes away and dries up, ¹²so mortals lie down

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and do not rise again; until the heavens are no more, they will not awake or be roused out of their sleep. ¹³Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath is past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! ¹⁴If mortals die, will they live again? All the days of my service I would wait until my release should come. ¹⁵You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands.

²³“O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! ²⁴O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! ²⁵For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; ²⁶and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Praise To You, O Christ** (*Spoken*)

- **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our living redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

We're now in the third week of reading through the Book of Job. The first week we read chapter one and saw that chapter, along with chapter 2 constituted a sort of folk tale where Job lost everything except his life and the tale was that he still worshipped God. The overriding question from these first 2 chapters asked was this: Does Job worship God for nothing, or does Job worship God because of what Job gains from God in terms of his personal blessings? If all we read was chapters 1 and 2 we'd have a pretty flat view of what it means to suffer loss and to experience the pain of griefpain.

Last week we heard more from Job and his friend Eliphaz. As the Book abruptly moved from a narrated folk tale to a genre called Wisdom Dialog there is an explosion of ideas. Job complains about his suffering and curses the days of his conception and his birth. Although we only read from Eliphaz's portion of the dialog, the friends suggestions can be summarized and categorized. They are usually thought of as being bad or even evil friends, mostly because at the end of the Book that's what God says about them. If we slow down and look at their ideas, we see they actually quote mainline religious thoughts. They rely on and

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quote parts of Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and from Proverbs. They talk to Job about his piety, telling him to pray to God and everything will be okay. They suggest Job may have limitations about what he knows to be true. They say Job doesn't know everything about God since God is largely a mystery and belief in God relies on faith. They go on to say perhaps Job has sinned and just doesn't know that he has sinned. These together summarize the friend's claims.

Now we move onto Job himself. One thing I noticed is that Job's speeches are oriented differently than the friend's speeches. The friends talk about God. They advise Job to pray harder, but they never pray themselves. When Job is at his lowest point he talks directly to God, we call that prayer. Now, what he says, the actual words, we might find surprising at the least and blasphemous at worse. In his pain over the losses he experienced, Job doesn't cast his ire on those who killed or stole his livestock. He doesn't curse the tornado or blame Mother Earth or mankind for Climate Change. Instead he casts all his sorrow, grief, pain, and his anger and blame onto God.

I don't know if you've ever been that low, I hope not and I pray you never do get that low, but most people have or will hit rock bottom at some point in their lives. I've been where Job is. I mean I know Job has lost much more than I have, but still I've seen times when I was overwhelmed with grief and loss. I've been at

the bottom and rather than look at the experiences and trying to figure out what's really happening and what or who or why these things are happening, I know what it's like to shake my fist in anger at God. I think there's something therapeutic about releasing all of our complaints and anger toward God. It allows us to let it go without directing it toward our neighbor, or God forbid against our families and friends. In the end, and I hope I'm not revealing too much about how the Book ends, God says the friends are bad and evil, but commends Job. God hears all of our prayers, even the ones that blame God for our suffering and God sort of absorbs it when we punch God on the chin...

The next thing I notice about Job is his ability to hold to completely opposite experiences of God in constant tension. It's as if both opposite ends of the spectrum are equally true and valid. Job says God is at one and the same time both totally hostile and unfair and still our only source for hope and justice. Job struggles between these two opposites and I believe that's a pretty common struggle. We tend to define God by our own experiences of God. In Job's life, he experienced God as the one who provided blessings and the gifts of good things, but also when those good things were taken away, Job experienced God as the unfair and unjust God. I wonder how much our own experiences of life shape our description of God... Was Job's experience accurate for most people? When Job

experiences the hostile, unjust and unfair God, his pain is overwhelming, even for his friends. For any of us who have experienced great loss, even though not as great as Job's, our pain and suffering seems overwhelming. As the Book of Job moves along we discover no matter how overwhelming our suffering feels, there is more to the universe than our pain. Our suffering is so great and so overwhelming, but it's not everything. That's why Job keeps coming back to God as the source of hope and redemption. He somehow knows that as heavy as his suffering is, and in chapter 6, verse 3 Job says it's heavier than all the sands of the seas, yet it is not everything... God is still greater than his pain and God is so much greater than all the pain you and I carry around with us all the time.

In Chapter 7 Job's speech changes and he begins to address God. This morning we have some of Job's Lament. Scholars suggest some parts of Job are parodies or even opposites of other parts of scripture. For example, Psalm 34, verse 8 says, "taste and see that the Lord is good." We often use that line as an invitation to Holy Communion. Job might answer back, "I've tasted and the Lord ain't always so good!" Even when good comes in the end, it doesn't negate the pain and suffering that brought us to that good. Even when Jesus was resurrected and after he had been to heaven, when he came back to show himself to the disciples he still had the marks in his hands, his feet, and his side. The glory of

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Easter doesn't erase Jesus' lament from the Cross, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?"

Talking about the Book of Job is so timely right now. It's so easy to draw comparisons between what happened to Job and what is happening in our society today. Here's what I mean. Most of us believe America is this great land of opportunity where hard work is paid off with success. We call it the American dream. How many of you were told or have told you children or grandchildren they could do and be whatever they set their minds to if they work hard. Probably all of us have had something like that said to us or we've said it to our young ones. When we taste America it tastes sweet and good. I didn't say easy, without trouble, or perfect, but good. On the other hand there are many people of color who have a different taste in their mouths from this great country. They have been stopped and questioned just because they have dark skin. They were born in neighborhoods where the schools were more like retail drug outlets than places of learning. The only opportunities they had were those given to them by the gangs that rule the streets. It's the same country, but the two groups experience it in vastly different ways. Job's friends are quick to defend God against Job's accusations. Most of us have experienced the American dream as a land that is mostly just, the land of the free and home of the brave and so, we rush to defend

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America against those who question America's values and our system of justice. My advice for all of us is to sit in the tension of both worlds. Let the disruption of some of these protests sink in for a while. Listen to the Wisdom Dialog between Black Lives Matter and the experiences we've had in the same America. The Bible presents us with many differing perspectives about God and our human relationship with God. Job's speeches and his answers back to his friend's platitudes and defences of God border on blasphemy. Yet I think we'll find in the end, for all his anger and frustration, for all his grief and blaming of God, Job is not smited nor punished, but rather he is the one whom God vindicates. Even at his worse, when he's accusing God of being totally hostile and unjust, even unloving toward humans, God says Job acted rightly. You see, all the while, Job's friends talk "about" God, like lot's of Pastors I know, and not directly "to" God. Job, on the other hand many times turns to God directly. What great movement of faith. Speaking directly to God shows Job kows God is real and alive. It shows Job believes God exists and listens to us and is mindful of mere humans beings. I wish I spent more time talking to God than about him. If I did, then maybe my life would be much better off. I could release all those grudges and all the ill feelings I keep suppressed way down under the surface and live my life free from the excess baggage I carry around.

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May we all learn to turn to God and talk directly to him, even when the words are harsh and our feelings are raw. May we never be afraid to express our dismay as well as our praise to the one God who is certainly big enough to handle our criticism. Job may have wished his words were written in stone, but they were written in something even more permanent, Holy Scripture. May your load be lifted when you can say through all your suffering and pain, I know my redeemer lives! Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** APOSTLES CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

P: We know that our redeemer lives, and that we also will live with him when our earthly lives have ended. Let us then rejoice in living with no fear of what comes next, and let us celebrate the days which we have been given. God of promise,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: On this Father's Day we give thanks for fathers, mentors and all who guide and care for children. We ask forgiveness where our relationships have fallen short, reconciliation where we have been estranged, and healing where we have been injured. Raise up supportive, loving people in our lives and teach us to be the same for others. God of promise,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: You have made this earth to renew itself, even where life has been destroyed. Show us how to partner with nature to replenish trees, reduce pollution, and clean the oceans which sustain our planet. God of promise,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: Give hope to those who have given up, and companionship to those who feel they have been abandoned. Send your Spirit's healing power to all whom we know need it most. We especially lift us all who have suffered the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This day we lift before your throne of grace... Bring healing, peace where lives have been adversely affected. God of promise,

C: Hear our prayer.

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P: We celebrate the Cheeseman's and all who translate your word so that others may come to know you and your promises, and look forward to the fellowship they will share with others beyond this mortal life. God of promise,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

P: Into your capable hands we commend all of these prayers, and place our trust in your faithfulness to answer them in whatever way you choose, for the sake of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

• OFFERING

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P: We answer when you call, O God, and all that we give is because you have first given to us. Bless these offerings to the work of your kingdom on earth, and may they benefit our sisters and brothers in all places. In Jesus' name,

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

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C: Amen.

*** SENDING HYMN**

I Know Than My Redeemer Lives! Verses 1, 2, 4, 7, & 8

1 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!

2 He lives triumphant from the grave;
he lives eternally to save;
he lives exalted, throned above;
he lives to rule his church in love.

4 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.

7 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.

8 He lives, all glory to his name!
He lives, my Savior, still the same;
what joy this blest assurance gives:
I know that my Redeemer lives!

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

Postlude

“That Old Time Religion”

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Next Sunday</i>
Ministers	All the People of Trinity	All the People of Trinity
Lector	N/A	N/A
Acolyte	N/A	N/A
Organist	Roxanne Groff	Roxanne Groff
Greeters	Dean Thompson	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman	Sharon Fourman
FaceBook Live Recorder	PJ Musser	

Health Tips for the Week
BODY: Try water aerobics
MIND: Listen to classical music
SPIRIT: Watch the sunrise



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This Week @ Trinity – June 21 thru June 28, 2020

Sun, June 21 
10:30 am Worship Service

Tues, June 23 

Fri, June 26
3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

Sun, June 28
10:30 am Worship Service

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE is this Tuesday, June 23. We want to recognize all of our 2020 graduating seniors in the July issue so please send the names of all graduates to secretary@pitsburgtlc.org as soon as possible.

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