

# “Yes, I Know That My Redeemer Lives!”

Job 6 - 26

Series: Job [#4]

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Theme: **When Times Are Tough, Keep Holding On To God.**

## Introduction

It's been said that life is like riding a roller coaster. Unlike some of us, I am not a big fan of roller coasters and similar rides. I've never been on West Edmonton Mall's spinning *Galaxy Orbiter*, nor the triple loop *Mind Bender*; and no, I've never been launched 120 feet skyward and then thrust back down on the *Space Shot*.

Life has its non-amusement roller coasters. You're riding smoothly along. Then problems hit, and before you can catch your breath, you are in a steep dive that takes your breath away and makes you think you are falling out of control; and then, as the G-forces of shock, pain and grief hit, you are thrust back down. Eventually life smooths out, more or less, but the next roller coaster ride may not be far around the corner.

This is our fourth week in the book of Job. Life was going along smoothly for Job, a seemingly endless smooth, upward ride ... until ... disaster struck. In one sense, everything from chapter one verse 13 to chapter 42 verse 6 is a downward plunge for Job.

But when you look carefully, you see him going through a series of ups and downs, an ongoing roller coaster ride within his tragedy. Often he is irritated, angry, discouraged, and in deep despair; at other moments he boldly insists on proving his integrity, not just to his friends, but to God *face to face*; and then, we see his hope in God, even though at times it is just a faint glimmer.

Last week we looked at the speeches of Job's friends and saw their example of “*How Not To Comfort*.” Today our focus moves to Job in this same section, to what he has to say. Even through all the loss and suffering, and God not answering Him, Job kept holding on to God. In the middle of all this he said to his friends and to God, “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.” “*Yes, I Know That My Redeemer Lives!*” The lesson from Job I want all of us to see and embrace today is that “*When Times Are Tough, Keep Holding On To God.*”

## Job's Tough Ongoing Struggle With His Friends.

Job had a tough ongoing struggle with his friends. In part that was because their advice was off-target. Their advice, usually given as *pronouncements*, may have sounded nice in theory when prospering, but it didn't make sense to people who were suffering, as Job was. It didn't work. It is not proved true in the real world.

Job opens his reply to Eliphaz's second speech in 16:2-4 by saying, “I have heard many

such things; sorry comforters are you all. Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer? I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you and shake my head at you.” Earlier, in 13:12, he told them that their arguments could not stand, “Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, your defenses are defenses of clay.”

Let’s briefly rewind to last week, his friends’ arguments. Their reasoning started with the premise that God is sovereign and righteous [true]. Building on this, God rewards good and punishes evil [also true]. Therefore, they concluded, all the good things we receive are God’s blessings for our righteousness and all the bad things we receive are God’s judgment for our sin. And so, Job’s suffering *has to be* the result of his sin. He is suffering terribly; so, his sins had to be terrible. [False]

Job also had held this erroneous view, to some extent. Now he challenged it by pointing out that some openly wicked people *do* prosper and *don’t* fall in this life (*cf.* 21:27-34).

Their arguments were so off-target that Job said to these, his good, long-time, close friends, “I do not find a wise man among you” (17:10). He also employed biting sarcasm in making his points. Look at the opening verses of chapter 12 as he replied to Zophar, “Truly you are the people [today, “*You’re the man*”], and with you wisdom will die!”

And again, in 26:1-3, “What a help you are to the weak! How you have saved the arm without strength! What counsel you have given to one without wisdom! What helpful insight you have abundantly provided!” *All of it biting sarcasm.*

To Job, their advice was off-target because, it didn’t fit his situation. He had looked long and hard within and knew he had committed no sins which would have moved God to judge him with these terrible things.

Neither did it fit the world in general. He said, “Look around you, your theories don’t fit the facts in our world! *Some wicked people do prosper!*”

And, it didn’t fit how God had revealed Himself. To be sure, Job was learning this last point as he went along, but he *was* learning it. Without the benefit of living this side of the cross, without the benefit of the completed Scriptures, Job was tuned to God and learned from Him.

Not only was their advice off-target, but their comfort was AWOL. Remember, Job’s friends stated and sincere purpose for coming to be with him was, as 1:11 tells us, “to sympathize with him and comfort him.”

Somewhere along the way of their journey, during the week of sitting in silence with Job, then hearing him cry out his misery and complaints, their sympathy and comfort went AWOL. As I read their speeches, I find no fingerprints of either sympathy or comfort.

Job came to the same disappointing and painful conclusion. His fundamental conclusion is expressed in 6:14-23. He starts with a statement, **6:14**, “For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; so that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty.”

Job is right on target here. The despairing—the discouraged, weak, helpless and hopeless—need *kindness* so they can see God and His love and mercy; so they can keep holding on to God. Job’s friends were not doing this.

Then Job draws the contrast: His friends were like a *wadi*, a dry river bed. The snow melt or heavy rain could make it a rushing torrent, but only briefly; and it would be dry again. Thirsty travelers would see the valley or gully ahead and hope for water, only to be disappointed. False hope for water. Here, false hope for comfort.

Job also said their words were not comforting or encouraging, but tormenting and insulting. In 19:2-3 he told them, “How long will you torment me and crush me with words? These ten times you have insulted me; you are not ashamed to wrong me.”

And, even more directly and strident, using hyperbole, he said they were hard-hearted, in 6:27, “You would even cast lots for the orphans and barter over your friend.”

His summary was that they were “worthless physicians” (13:4); and “sorry comforters” (16:2). “*Sorry*,” or “*miserable*” in other versions, has its origins in the idea of work; then trouble (which work can be); then to troublesome, or that which causes trouble. What a juxtaposition of terms, *trouble-causing comforters*!

Yes, Job had a tough, ongoing struggle with his friends. He also had a tough ongoing struggle with God. In fact, as we read his speeches we find him spending more time and addressing more issues with God than his friends.

### **Job’s Tough Ongoing Struggle With God.**

There were several dynamics that contributed to Job’s ongoing struggle with God. The first was his view of how God was treating him. One of Job’s basic questions was “*Why me?*” That’s a question that most, if not all of us have asked.

He asked God, “Why is Your attention intently, continuously on me?”

“What is man that You magnify him, and that You are concerned about him, that You examine him every morning and try him every moment? Will You never turn Your gaze away from me, nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle?” (17:17-19).

A sharp contrast to King David’s positive statement of awe of God’s concern using similar terms in Psalms 8 and 144.

Then in 7:20 he asked, “...Why have You set me as Your target...?” And, in 6:4 he said, “...the arrows of the Almighty are within me, their poison my spirit drinks...”

In 13:24 he asked, “Why do You hide Your face and consider me Your enemy?”

In 9:17-18 he complains, “... [God] bruises me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to get my breath, but saturates me with bitterness.”

He also asked, “Why, God, do You destroy my hope?”

“Water wears away stones, its torrents wash away the dust of the earth; so You destroy man’s hope.” (14:19)

Now let’s look at one of several longer sections where Job graphically describes how he thinks God is treating him.

“But now [God] has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company. You have shriveled me up, it has become a witness; and my leanness rises up against me, it testifies to my face. His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth ... [drop down to verse 11] ... God hands me over to ruffians and tosses me into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He shattered me, and He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior.” (16:7 f.)

“Why, God? Why are You treating me like this?” This was Job’s view of how God was treating him.

A second part of Job’s tough ongoing struggle with God was his mission to defend himself before God. Sometimes Job boldly, even brashly insisted on this.

13:3, “... I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue with God.”

23:1-4, “...Even today my complaint is rebellion; His hand is heavy despite my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments.”

Then, sometimes he expressed his mission as a plea. In 13:22-23, he said to God,

“Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, then reply to me. How many are my iniquities and sins? Make known to me my rebellion and my sin.”

Often he expressed this mission with an understanding and acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty and his own finiteness.

9:2-4, “... how can a man be in the right before God? If one wished to dispute with Him, he could not answer Him once in a thousand times. Wise in heart and mighty in strength, who has defied Him without harm?”

He also pursued this hearing before God with a view to listening to and learning from God,

not just to speak.

23:5-7, “I would learn the words which He would answer, and perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; and I would be delivered forever from my Judge.”

And then, there was his desire that even when he died, that his case, his innocence, would not be forgotten.

16:17-18, “... there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure. O earth, do not cover my blood, and let there be no resting place for my cry.”

This was part of his ongoing struggle with God. One of the things it teaches us is that we too can and should pursue, be on a mission to hear from God, to gain as much understanding as we can, and to experience resolution from God.

A third dynamic in “Job’s tough ongoing struggle with God” was His passion to be faithful and close to God. This was a constant, in spite of all that had happened to him.

Turn to chapter 6 again. Job begins his first reply by giving vent to his great pain and turmoil,

“Oh that my grief were actually weighed and laid in the balances together with my calamity! For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas; therefore my words have been rash.” (6:2-3)

Then he pictures his suffering as God shooting him with poison arrows (6:4). He goes on to tell us he has lost his appetite to live, and pleads with God to take his life (6:8-9). But then, in his deep despair, he said,

“But it is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” (6:10)

Job tells us, “I’m hurting. I want to die. *But*, I haven’t turned against God and His truth.” He found joy in faithfulness. This was *Job’s passion*, to know God, to be true to Him, to be close to Him.

We see this again in chapter 23, starting at verse 8,

“Behold, I go forward but [God] is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”

Do we have this kind of passion for God? In the good and bad times, the easy and the tough times, *do we have this kind of passion for God?* We introduced the song “*Blessed Be His name*” in the first weeks of this series. In it we have sung that when we are “in the land that is plentiful, where [God’s] streams of abundance flow;” or, “when [we’re] found in the desert place,” when we “walk through the wilderness;” or, “when the sun’s shining down on [us], when the world’s all as it should be;” or, when we are “on the road marked with suffering; though there’s pain in the offering;” whether God gives or takes away, “[our] hearts will *choose* to say, “Lord, blessed be Your name.”

This is the passion for God Job had, that we should have.

In “*Job’s tough ongoing struggle with God,*” he had a view of God not treating him well, a mission to defend Himself before God, a passion to be faithful and close to God and, the last dynamic was his hold on true hope in God.

Hope is a critical part of life. Hope in God and His truth about Himself and us, is critical for every believer. We have seen Job pleading and demanding an audience with God, a *court date* to establish his innocence.

He knew that it was serious to ask to argue his case before God, especially claiming mistreatment by God. And so, he said, “Though [God] slay me, I will *hope* in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.” (13:15).

He persisted in his claims based on the conviction of his innocence but, more importantly, based on his *hope* in God as the sovereign, righteous, loving and merciful One. And this brings us to one of the most well-known passages in the book of Job.

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!” (19:25-27)

Sitting in the ashes of the garbage dump, scraping his sores, in constant excruciating pain, being abandoned by almost everyone, a laughing stock, being attacked by his three good friends; and all the while, God is silent. *Yet* he rises, and loudly proclaims, “I know that my Redeemer lives!” “I know that God who has redeemed me and who will redeem me not only exists, but He is living and active! I know that at the last day, on the day of judgment, God will take His *stand* on the earth.”

This term “*stand*” is a legal term meaning to “stand up in court,” to be an advocate. Job declares, “In the day of judgment God will stand up for me! God will stand beside me as the One who has redeemed me!” Even though Job lived over 2,000 years before Christ and His cross, before the Scriptures were completed, he knew from God that after he died, at the judgment, he will have a resurrected body and in that body he will see God face to face. And as he thought of this, he said, “My heart faints within me!” Or, as the New Living Translation renders it, “I am overwhelmed at the thought!”

In Handel's *Messiah*, Charles Jennens, who put the text together, opened the third section which focuses on Christ's promise to believers, with Job 19:25-26, KJV,

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

Jennens then joined 1 Coriunthians 15:20 to this, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (KJV). *This* is the ground for our hope. Because Jesus Christ was raised, we can say with Job, “Yes, I Know That *My* Redeemer Lives! I *know* that He will take His stand by me. I *know* I will see Him face to face!”

### **Conclusion.**

So, “When Times Are Tough, Keep Holding On To God!” As we wrap this up, I don't know where each one of you are today. For some of us life is a smooth, upward ride. It's a time of plenty, the streams of abundance are flowing, the sun's shining down on you, the world is all as it should be; God is giving you good things.

For others, life's roller coaster is plunging you downward. You are in a desert place, walking in a wilderness; you're on a road marked with suffering; there is pain in the offering; God is taking away.

What I **do** know is that wherever you are, if Christ is your Redeemer, you can choose to keep holding on to Him, and to bless His name.

But if Christ is not your Redeemer, if you have not come to Christ, who died for you and took your sin upon Himself, then you are not forgiven; you are not redeemed. You are still separated from God by your sin. You have no solid anchor or real hope for today or any day in this life. You have no hope for eternity.

Let's bow our heads now for a time to reflect on the truth God has given us today, and to respond to Him.

If you know Christ as your Savior, thank Him. Thank Him that you have been redeemed and that your Redeemer, Jesus Christ, lives. Make the choice, or reconfirm your choice to choose to hold on to Him, to bless Him in all circumstances.

If you know Christ as your Savior, but have not really be trusting and following Him as you should, take this time to confess that to God and renew your walk with Him. You have drifted along or walked away too long. Settle it here and now. If you do this, after I pray in a few moments and then as a video begins to play, come down to the front, so we can talk, pray and thank God with you.

If you do not know Christ as Savior, come to Him now. You have waited long enough. Putting it off, and throwing up excuses hasn't gotten you anywhere. Jesus is calling you to Himself today. This is your day to come to Him, and be able to say “Yes, I Know That *My* Redeemer Lives! I know He will be with me today and I will live forever with Him.”

Tell God, “Yes, I have sinned. I am a sinner. Thank You God, for Jesus dying on the cross for me. Forgive me of my sins. I am turning from sin to follow You.”

If you pray that prayer now, or want to talk about this with me or others, after I pray in a few moments and then as a video begins to play, come down to the front. Someone will come with you, if you ask them. We want to talk with you, pray with you, and welcome you into God’s family.

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