

18-17-01.wpd—Where Then Is Our Hope?

memorial, death, resurrection, hope

Job 17:11-16; 19:25-27

The greatest hope in the face of death is resurrection.

INTRODUCTION:

—Many modern books have been written to paint a picture of death as a friendly event. It seems a logical thing to do... since we all have to face it anyway, let's *put a good face on it!* Let's make it *bitter-sweet... more human-friendly*. Well, the Bible doesn't paint that picture of death. One of the Bible's most famous sufferers, Job, has a more dismal view:

Job 17:11-16 (NIV), *My days have passed, my plans are shattered, and so are the desires of my heart. These men turn night into day; in the face of darkness they say, 'Light is near.' If the only home I hope for is the grave, if I spread out my bed in darkness, if I say to corruption, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My sister,' where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me? Will it go down to the gates of death? Will we descend together into the dust?*

Was Job's evaluation correct? Or were they right who tried to "turn night into day" by telling him, 'Light is near' ... "in the face of darkness." He asks a pointed question, "If the only home I hope for is the grave": "**Where then is my hope?**" And as we pause in this brief moment of remembering another dear life ended by death, we must ask it too: **Where then is our hope?**

I. Death is Not a Human-Friendly Hope

- A. It says what seems to be a final "NO!" to our *human instincts* of *survival* and *self-preservation*.
- B. It shatters all *human plans* and *dreams*, and puts an end to every *human project*, every *human endeavor*.
- C. It breaks apart the very *heart of human desires*, which only find their true fulfillment in our relationships with loved ones.

TRANS: Job said, "If the only home I hope for is the grave,... where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?" Was Job happy to meet humanity's life-long enemy dressed up at the last minute in a *human-friendly disguise*? If that was *hope*, it would die with him! It would be a useless companion at "the gates of death." To "descend together into the dust" with such a *hope* was a dismal prospect, because **death is not a human-friendly hope**. It's a reality, but not a *human-friendly* one.

II. Resurrection is the Only Human-Friendly Hope

- A. In the midst of his emotional turmoil and severe pain, Job's faith reached out for a truly *human-friendly hope*, a hope that affirms humanity and the divine goodness of our creation in God's image as **physically embodied beings**. Listen to what Job says in **Job 19:25-27** (NIV), *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*
- B. As he faced death, *Job became the 1st voice in the Bible to speak prophetically about the coming of Christ* and about the *bodily resurrection* God will bring to humanity through Him.
 1. *Resurrection hope* is *human-friendly*, because it promises us that we will again stand upon the earth, this time in immortal bodies.
 2. *Resurrection hope* is *human-friendly*, because *after [our] skin has been destroyed* it puts us back in [our] *flesh*. (Humans aren't just *animals*, nor *angels*. We are *incarnations* of God's image. We're *fleshly, body-spirit* beings. [**We feel uncomfortable** around *human corpses* and in the presence of *human ghosts* because to be fully human those two parts must be inseparably wedded, and that's what resurrection does!])
 3. *Resurrection hope* is *human-friendly*, because, as Job said, "*in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes*" (This hope in Christ, the *Redeemer* Job predicted, is the ultimate *human-friendly* hope, because the God who will resurrect us became one of us in order to make it possible.

CONCLUSION:

— **The greatest hope in the face of death is resurrection.** Our friend and loved one, _____, shared Job's faith in this hope, but had the advantage of celebrating Christ's own Resurrection again and again at Easter. You may not set aside this day as an annual reminder of _____'s life, but each year, as Easter rolls around, may you remember his faith in this resurrection hope, and may you make it your own.

Job 17:11-16 (NIV)

- 11 My days have passed, my plans are shattered,
and so are the desires of my heart.
- 12 These men turn night into day;
in the face of darkness they say, 'Light is near.'
- 13 If the only home I hope for is the grave,
if I spread out my bed in darkness,
- 14 if I say to corruption, 'You are my father,'
and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My sister,'
- 15 where then is my hope?
Who can see any hope for me?
- 16 Will it go down to the gates of death?
Will we descend together into the dust?"

Job 19:25-27 (NIV)

- 25 I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
- 26 And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
- 27 I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!