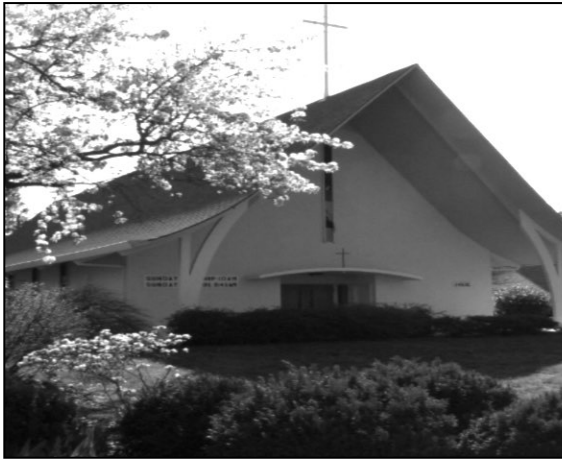




22nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 9, 2025

St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Portland, OR

**THE LESSONS: Job 19:23-27; Psalm 17;
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke
20:27-38**

**THE SERMON: "I Know That... My
Redeemer Lives?"**

Grace and Peace to you in the NAME of GOD: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

I'm almost embarrassed to tell this joke, but shortly after Marilyn and I came to St. Timothy, Alan Perhus told me to keep telling these silly stories because he liked them. So, blame Alan for this. Once there was a young boy, around 8 years old, who lived in a village at the bottom of a hill in ancient China. On top of the hill was a temple where monks lived. One day, the boy heard a strange sound coming from the top of the hill. Curious, he walked up the hill and knocked on the giant doors of the temple. The head monk answered. The boy asked what the sound was, the abbot simply replied, "I can't tell you, you're not a monk." 3 years later, the boy heard the sound again and walked to the temple to ask about the sound. Again the monk answered, "I can't tell you, you're not a monk. To become a monk, you must count every grain of sand in the Gobi Desert." So, the boy went to the Gobi Desert and counted the sand. After several years, the boy, now a young man, returned to the temple and tells the head monk, "I counted every grain of sand!" The head monk says, "You are now a monk, and can now learn of the sound! But, first, you must find the key." The young man asks, "Where is it?" The answer is "Back in the Gobi." The man goes back to the desert. As he returns with the key, he confronts three fires which block his way. He jumps over two fires, but, as he is jumping over the third, he drops the key into the flames. Disappointed, he returns to the head monk. "Surely for a door that's so important, there must be a spare key somewhere?" The abbot answers, "Yes, there is one in the village headman's home at the bottom

of the hill.” The man asks “Why couldn’t you tell me that first?” The abbot replies, “It’s part of becoming a monk.” So the man goes to the headman’s home and gets the key. He jumps over the fires, unlocks the door, and finds out what the sound is... You wanna know what the sound is? I can't tell you, you're not a monk.

Job 19:23-27

When I read the book of Job, I sometimes feel like that young man when I try to understand why Job had to suffer so much - mainly because I want to know why God allows bad things to happen to good people. It’s pretty clear that Job’s self-righteous, judgmental, religious, so-called “friends” think that Job must have done something awful to be punished so severely. But, in the end, God tells these misguided, well-meaning do-gooders to have Job pray for them. In other words, we humans don’t have the answers to suffering. That’s why in the closing chapters of this book, God doesn’t provide Job answers; instead, God asks 77 questions to make Job realize the immeasurable vastness of God’s sovereignty and Job’s limited capacity to understand the mystery of God’s universe. But, we try, don’t we? That’s why our lesson lets us see how Job is trying to justify himself before his friends and God, “O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever!” Then, despite all the confusion and turmoil, Job makes an amazing confession, “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...” It’s not surprising that many Christians have interpreted this to be a prophecy for Christ’s resurrection. But, to be honest, I don’t think the storytellers of Job had that in mind. I’m sure all they wanted the reader to know is that God will get them though. They can rise up from any setback. They might not be able to answer why bad things happen to good people, they could promise is that no matter how bad things get in life, God will always be there for you. And, if there’s a resurrection story for you - if you can trust that God always gives us second chances - and that should be good news.

Psalms 17

Our psalm today seems to tell us that David was having some Job-like trial in his life. We don’t know what it was. But, we know that David faced

many challenges. Some of the worst were when King Saul, the king David loved, became jealous of David's triumphs and popularity and wanted to kill him or, when his beloved son, Absalom, rebelled and tried to take over the kingdom. You can hear David's confusion and bewilderment in the psalm, "Hear a just cause, O Lord... give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit... If you try my heart... if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me... I have avoided the ways of the violent. My steps have held fast to your paths... I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my words..." It almost sounds like what Job had to go through. Trusted friends have betrayed them. They feel alone. But, despite that isolation and sense of abandonment, both Job and David trust and know that their Redeemer lives and David proclaims, "I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God... Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand." Then, David beautifully describes his intimate understanding of God's love for him, "Guard me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, from the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me." God loves us and we are not alone. That's the message that the angels gave the shepherds to announce Jesus' birth, "Fear not, for God is with you..." God loves us and wants to be with us.

Luke 20:27-38

That's such a simple message. That's why we learned in Confirmation that sin is when we choose not to let God be with us. And, like Adam and Eve in the Garden, we want to be like God and be in control and, so, we ask questions like Job's friends "What did you do so that God is punishing you?" Or, to seem more intellectual we ask questions like the Sadducees did when they confronted Jesus about the resurrection. It's ironic that the Sadducees did that because, as Luke noted, "(the Sadducees) say there is no resurrection," or, as we learned in Confirmation, "... that's why they're sad, you see..." But, Jesus knows they're trying to trap him when they ask him, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother." And, after contriving a situation in which all seven brothers marry the widow and eventually die, they ask, "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her." And, Jesus asserts, "... in the

resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage... because they are like angels and are children ... of the resurrection.” Then, he says that Moses said God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so, “(God) is God not of the dead but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.” That’s why I believe that eternal life doesn’t begin after we die. Eternal life begins now. That’s why John tells us in his gospel, “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” Knowing God and Jesus Christ is eternal life. God is the God of the living. Eternal life begins now because you believe.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17, The Call and the Challenge

We know that Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians was the first of his many letters to Christians and many scholars think this second letter was written shortly after his first letter because some false teachers were declaring that the end of the world had happened. That’s why Paul wrote, “... we beg you... not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed... to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here.” Then, Paul warns about false teachers and false worship and encourages them to be faithful, “So then... stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us... Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.” This is good instruction for American Christians today when some so-called “Christian leaders” are politicizing the faith to align with their politics, who seem to be joining the crowd that crucified Jesus by claiming they have no god but Caesar. The Christian faith is the original “no kings” movement. In fact, in the gospel of John, after feeding the five thousand, Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, so, he slipped away into the hills by himself. As a Jew, Jesus affirmed the understanding that only God is king. But, as the Son of God, Jesus showed he is, in substance and reality, God and our King. And, as Job proclaimed, “I know that my Redeemer lives!” He lives triumphant from the grave... He lives to grant me rich supply... He lives to silence all my fears... He lives to bless me with His love... Christ the King lives because He is God and God is of the living and not the dead! I know that my Redeemer lives! (ELW 619 I Know That My Redeemer Lives)