

23 “Oh, that my words were recorded,
that they were written on a scroll,
24 that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead,
or engraved in rock forever!
25 I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on 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!

A Comforter, A Quilt

When I think of comfort, I think of sweatpants but when I think of comfort and love - I think of quilts. There isn't much more comforting than wrapping up in a quilt on a cold winter night. It doesn't matter where you are at a quilt can take you home. In my family the quilts were made of old clothes, different bits and pieces, that even smelled like home. Quilts kept me warm and comforted knowing I was wrapped in something she spent so much time on. Looking around this room it's obvious Cheryl had a problem: she was a prolific quilter and when you consider this is only a portion of what she's made it's easy to see the warmth and love she gave to so many.

But then when you look out our lesson it doesn't look like Job has a quilt, let alone a lap blanket. He's lost everything he ever held near and dear and then his friends turned Spanish Inquisitors demanding he confess his hidden sins. Until Job finally cries out in Job 16:2, "*Miserable comforters are you all!*" Miserable quilts. You don't keep me warm. You don't remind me of better times. You don't provide any comfort in distress. Rather like a wet blanket they only add to his misery.

But even without a quilt Job had comfort in his misery. He was covered in the comfort of his redeemer. That's the same quilt that covered Cheryl, the same quilt that covers us as we grieve. We are left with many quilts from Cheryl but we have the same comfort that covered Job, a redeemer who lives.

But it sure doesn't appear that way. It doesn't look like anyone cares for Job. The first three chapters describe God as king and judge over all and then Satan stands before

him and accuses God of governing the world in such a way that people are good because God blesses them or people are bad because God curses them. Satan holds out this worldview that if you're good you're blessed. If you're bad, you're punished.

The problem is that Job doesn't fit such a simplistic system. Job has done nothing wrong and yet bad things happen to him. Job has the perfect life up till chapter 1. He is healthy, wealthy, wise, large family, righteous man. But then his children die in a freak accident, marauders steal his flocks, he loses everything, and he is left with a nagging wife. He had everything but by chapter 2 he sits in ash, relieves his pain by scraping his boils with a broken piece of pottery. And yet in all of this he does not sin. It doesn't look like anyone cares - not even God who calls Job to Satan's attention yet again, "Have you considered my servant Job. He is blameless and upright."

Then when his so called "comforters" (his friends) come and lay a wet blanket over his shoulders. From chapter 4 to 37 we see a cycle of friends badgering Job. If you are suffering... you must have done something wrong. They urge him, "repent of whatever wrong you've done." They accuse him, "Confess. You did this... That's why you are being punished." Each accuse him of sinning. Job breaks down, crying out with confidence that he has a Redeemer. Someone who will defend him from future accusations. Someone who will defend him after he is dead and gone. Someone who will stand up for him and certify that Job is a dearly loved child of God even when it doesn't look like it.

When we compare Job's life to Cheryl's you might see some similarities. She worked until the end and just when it looked like she would begin to enjoy retirement, travel to Hawaii with friends, or even visit Montana to visit family - She got very sick. Her health was taken away. She was stuck in a hospital, which she hated. Separated from her dog and from family. There she worried about her nails and her hair.

There wasn't much comfort. Satan brought out his wet blanket, "You must have done something wrong to deserve this." Sometimes Satan's blanket came to different people, "You could have done something more. You could have searched for a second opinion. You should have done more." These accusations come from inside of us, "If only I would have done...paid more attention to her, you'd still have her." Sometimes we even level these accusations on God.

We fall into the same simplistic worldview that God blesses the good and curses the wicked. We fail to see that since the fall into sin this world is corrupt. The good and the bad alike will die. **But where is Cheryl's Redeemer? Where was God in all of this?** Where was he when the devil tormented her, her health failed her, and her last hope of going back home was taken away.

We cry out why? Why God? But even in these moments we find comfort.

Job hopes to be vindicated as a child of God. He wanted to be heard then and in the future. Job wanted all to know that he was not guilty of sin and unbelief of which his friends accused him. He knows he has a Redeemer. Redeemer - takes all that is bad and makes it good. Sick - healed. Dead - made alive. Confident expression of faith in his coming savior. Even if he died. Even if his body wasted away and returned to the dust from which it came - he had a Redeemer, a God who would vindicate him.

God does vindicate his child. God does etch these words and inscribe them in millions of Bibles. This is God's defense of Job before the accusations of the world. Job is wrapped in the warmth of a God who cares enough to come before his creature and comfort him. Near the end of this book - God calls Job's friends to account. He chastises them for misrepresenting him. He even calls Job to account for accusing him. But God doesn't answer Job's question, "Why?" God knows that Satan is testing Job. Satan knows that Satan is testing job. You and I know that Satan is testing Job. But Job didn't know and never found out.

We don't know why God would allow this to happen to Cheryl. She didn't know why? We won't know why? We have excuses that even Cheryl brought up, "My daughter is in church because I am sick. A close friend is closer to God." But we don't know why. We can't say why? But we we can look back on the comfort in the confidence she left behind.

That she had a redeemer who came to her on a regular basis and reassured her that even though she suffers she is a child of God. No we don't have a book titled "Cheryl" for the world to read but we do have her redemption written in the blood of her Savior. Who weekly wrapped her repeatedly with the comfort of his Word and Sacrament. In these same pages of scripture we find Cheryl's redeemer our redeemer who engraves these words ever deeper into our hearts. Giving us confidence in sickness, comfort in life and in death. Giving us the full assurance that she is in heaven because she and all of us have a redeemer who died to take away her sin, doubt, and every accusation. One day we will see her again, not in the spirit but in the flesh with our own eyes we will see her.

But for now we still cry out, "Why?" And like Job we don't know. So when so called friends turn inquisitors asking, "How can you be so certain?" **When someone accuses, "She must have done something wrong to deserve this."** You can respond, **"And what of it? I deserve this both now and in eternity but my hope does not rest on what I**

deserve. My hope rests on Christ. He took my shame upon his cross and left it in the grave. That is Cheryl's comfort, that's another quilt she left behind.

That's because she wants you more than warm and comfortable - comforted by the same quilt that covers Job. Our Redeemer lives! *and in the end he will stand on 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!*

Now may the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God, give you peace.

Amen.