

light, we confess our sins together, and we receive forgiveness by faith together. That's the strength of the Christian Church. It's been that way all along, but this past year has really taught us what that actually looks like.

For it is only when we confess our sins daily, and we look to the cross and see the dead body of Jesus hoisted upon it with our transgressions nailed to it, and then by faith confess that Christ is risen; that Christ has made atonement for our sins; that Christ freely gives us the forgiveness of sins that we can truly confess with Job, **“And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:26-27).**

This past year has not been easy for anybody. But on this day, what Christ did by rising from the dead teaches us as Christians that we don't look back, but we look forward. We look forward to the day when the consummation of all God's promises will be fulfilled. For in Christ we have the assurance of the resurrection of the body – our bodies. Because Christ lives, when we daily repent and believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, we shall see for ourselves our glorified Savior, who redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, who purchased us with His own blood, who washed us in Baptism, who strengthens and preserves us in His Supper. For in the Lord's Supper, we look not upon a dead Jesus, but the risen Christ, who comes to us in His living body and living blood under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins!

Job writes, **“Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!” (Job 19:23-24).** Well, Job, they were written. They were inscribed. They are engraved. Jesus says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away” (Mt 24:35). The Easter Gospel – I know my redeemer lives – is the language of the Christian Church in all times and places! Job's confession even in the midst of such despairing calamity is still giving us sweet comfort today.

And that's truly the Easter message we need to take home today. Even in times of tribulation, it is precisely the resurrection Gospel that Christ is risen, He is risen, indeed! Alleluia – that brings us true, everlasting comfort despite the external circumstances around us.

What a blessing to be able to worship together today. I know we have had to make some sacrifices this past year, but I have pastor friends in other countries around the world whose governments still do not allow more than 10 people, in some places 5 plus one pastor, to gather for worship.

As Christians, we wish we could keep the same Easter “euphoria” on-going. As Christians, we want to see our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in church every Sunday all year long. Last year was like a glimpse of heaven: it seemed like non-stop Easter joy especially since the rest of the world was shut down. We had sixteen Easter services from Easter Monday – Wednesday. It was a reprieve from the uncertainty around us. It's when the words of the hymn, “Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared” really hit home: “Lord, I believe what you have said; help me when doubts assail me. Remember that I am but dust, and let my faith not fail me. Your supper in this vale of tears, refreshes me and still my fears and is my priceless treasure” (LSB #622, v. 6).

As we sang in the sermon hymn: “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!” The Christian longs for the eternal comfort with our Savior in heaven! So was Job. If Job can confess that his redeemer lives in the midst of all his suffering, and the Christ hadn't even come to earth for the first time yet, then we all can, too! No, maybe our “euphoric feelings” may not always be there, but the truth of the Gospel IS, AND THAT'S OUR SURE HOPE, COMFORT, AND LIFE.

True faith weathers the storms of life and can still confess with Job, “And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.” In the resurrection of our bodies, raised in human flesh, glorified and imperishable, we will behold God face to face! The assurance of that joy is because of the happenings of the last three days, and not another. Just as we shall behold God and not another. No one can take that joy away from you just as no one could take away the Savior from the tomb, and just as no one could take away His life. Christ freely gave it. And Christ freely took it up again. “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.” We sang those words last year. We sang them this year. And as long as God allows me to serve as your pastor, this Church will sing them every single Easter unless Christ comes first. The words of the hymn don't change. God doesn't change. The

resurrection Gospel doesn't change. Christ lives and so, too, shall we! His call to us to trust it and live by it doesn't change. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen!