

WORTHLESS PHYSICIANS

Know that only God can work the impossible -- Know what the Lord has done to make your days last forever.

Job 14:1-5

TEXT: *Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure. Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

"Worthless physicians" – that's what Job called those several friends of his who had heard about his tremendous losses. Those of you who are familiar with the Book of Job know that within one day, Job lost everything he had and everyone he loved. Only he and his wife and a few servants survived. Twice, two bands of terrorists attacked and destroyed his flocks, herds of camels, horses and donkeys, killed his herdsmen and servants, leaving Job penniless. Then a horrible storm destroyed his sheep and shepherds. Then a great wind destroyed the house of his oldest son who was hosting a great banquet and all his sons and daughters were killed. A few days later, Job got sick. Painful boils erupted all over his body to the point where Job himself said that the smell was so bad not even his wife wanted to be near him.

Then one day, after hearing about Job's terrible loss and pain, Job's three friends come to offer their support. But the support that they give is worthless humanistic drivel. It amounts to the basic false teachings that are still in the world of religion today. Their false religious advice brings no comfort or hope to Job, so that's why Job finally declares: ***You are worthless physicians, all of you! If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom. ... Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf? ... Will you argue the case for God? Would it turn out well if he examined you?*** Job 13

During these last four Sundays of the Church Year that we traditionally call "the End Times Sundays," it serves us well to consider this same question Job directed to his friends he labels as "Worthless Physicians:" ***Would it turn out well if he examined you?*** There is only ONE Physician to whom we must turn for the answer to the most important question of life. He is Jesus from whom we have the certain hope of life eternal. **Know that only God can work the impossible; Know what the Lord has done to make your days last forever.**

Today's Old Testament Lesson is from Job 14: ***Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure. Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*** It sets before us that most important question: If this is true, (and both history and experience prove that it is) what kind of God is he who would pay any attention at all to such a creation and to those who are here today and gone tomorrow like withering flowers and fleeting shadows? What kind of God offers humanity the hope of life only for a time, tasting some of the goodness of God, but then taking it away? If this is true, what kind of God plays with us like this? ***Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*** Are we only objects of his good pleasure, and then objects of his wrath? ***Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment?*** Where is there any kind of hope beyond whatever each human being is able to accomplish for himself during the time that we have on this earth?

Or, is there life beyond this life? God created man in his own image, that is, both knowing what is God's will for man and having the perfect love and desire to follow and fulfill God's will. But after Adam sinned, that love was destroyed and corrupted by sin. Nevertheless, mankind retained that knowledge that God exists and that there is life after death, but only if God would step in and do something about it. Like Job says: ***Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!*** No one, that is, but God himself.

With God, all things are possible. God who created man in his image is able to re-create man in his image. This he has done through Jesus. God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world, born of a woman but without a human father so that the original sin of Adam was not sin inherited in his human nature. Being true God and true Man in one person, Jesus kept the demands of God's law perfectly so that his perfect holiness is both the holiness of God and the holiness of a sinless human. Then Scripture reveals that God would exchange man's

sin for Christ's righteousness and that exchange would be witnessed on the cross and then on the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Paul states it this way: ***God will credit righteousness-for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*** Ro 4 David declared: ***Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean!*** Ps 51 But God did this with more than the hyssop plant. It was accomplished with the holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death of Jesus.

Know that only God can work the impossible, and he did with Jesus' death and resurrection. Now know and be assured of what the Lord has done to make your days last forever.

Anyone who claims to be a Christian, more than that and even worse than that, anyone who claims to be a Christian preacher and does not preach what you have just heard is what Job called "Worthless Physicians." We live in a culture and a society today that fits like the last perfect piece of the puzzle. The puzzle is a picture of the days just before the Lord's return on Judgment Day. Paul warned Timothy, a young pastor: ***The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus...*** 1

Ti 4 I want to be a good minister of Christ Jesus, so I must point this out to you within the couple of minutes we have left. Don't fall for those preachers who tell you what to do to make yourself FEEL more godly and Christian. The Roman Catholic Church one day began to forbid priests to marry, and to abstain from certain foods. Countless thousands followed that hypocrisy. And they weren't alone. The protestants who teach people to look into their hearts and to try to make themselves more pure and presentable as Christians have led countless thousands away from the cross of Jesus in order to look into their hearts for some kind of proof that they have accepted Jesus.

I want to be a good minister, the kind that Paul urged Timothy to be. So I urge you to look at Jesus and to know what he has done for you to make your days last forever! Don't look into your hearts! The Bible says that the heart of man is only evil all the time. And even though the Holy Spirit at your baptism has created in you a "new man" and a clean heart, your sinful nature will still stand beside that new heart God has created to argue with you, either urging you to think that you are good and deserving, or bringing up from the depths of your memory all those skeletons of your past. Don't look into your hearts! Look at Jesus on the cross and then at the empty tomb! Hear again what Paul writes: ***(Jesus Christ) was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*** Ro 4 Either this is true for all, or it is true for none!

The other day, my wife noticed a weird looking spot on the back of my shoulder. I had been mowing the lawn and it looked like a piece of a leaf, but it was an asymmetrically shaped mole. Since I was scheduled for my regular physical that week she wrote a note for me so that I would not forget to tell my doctor to look at it. He did. He cut it out and sent it in for examination. A couple of days later he called to tell me that the results were that it was a melanoma cancer and that he was sending me to the Melanoma Cancer Clinic at the University of MI. To make a long story short, they cut out a chunk of shoulder flesh, sowed it up beautifully and the tests came back stating that "they got it all, and there was no need for any further treatment." No chemo and radiation! What a relief! But what a scare! What if my doctor would not have cut out that mole and sent it in? What if he had been a worthless physician? My life would have been different today without a doubt.

Job writes: ***Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure. Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*** Yes, our days on earth are numbered. But it's the number of days that the Lord has assured us that will continue beyond our days here on this earth. That is what is most important! Jesus, your Good Physician has sent in your flesh for biopsy, and the report has come back as FORGIVEN! As Martin Luther has taught us to say: where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation!

Know Jesus, the Good Physician and what he has done. He has done the impossible by purifying sinners with his blood and righteousness so that you will live forever and ever and ever! Amen.