

## Old Testament

### **Job 19:1, 23-27 I know that my Redeemer lives.**

Job expresses a burning desire to see the God who has been the object of his faith through many trials. Job's yearning encourages the mourners to see death in a positive light, as the consummation of our earthly journey, like reaching the finish line at the end of a long, arduous race. Our greatest goal and greatest desire will finally be realized in the beatific vision of heaven.

Since just about everyone knows that Job was famous for long, unrelenting suffering, quoting his words can evoke empathy for a deceased person who also suffered greatly, either physically or emotionally. Hence, this passage is most often chosen for people who suffered from chronic illness, addiction, or depression.

### **Wisdom 3:1-9 The souls of the just are in the hand of God.**

The author describes the huge discrepancy between how death looks to us and what our faith tells us is actually happening. The family and friends of the deceased can relate to what the author calls, "the view of the foolish," for they have seen firsthand the unsettling process of dying. Yet, they want to believe that their loved one is at peace in the hand of God, as the author asserts. This emotional dissonance is present at most funerals. Naming and explaining it can help the mourners to process their feelings.

The image of gold being "proved" in the furnace speaks to the spiritual growth that we often experience through hardships. This image can be especially powerful in the case of a person who seemed to grow closer to God throughout a long illness.

This text shows a decidedly pre-Christian perspective. It speaks approvingly of "the just" and "the faithful," who have shown themselves worthy to abide with God in heaven. Grace and mercy are with God's "holy ones." There is no mention of pardon and salvation for sinners. After Christ's death and resurrection, the promise of abiding with God forever was extended to all who believe in him.

Families often choose this text for people who were widely regarded as just, faithful and holy. However, in other cases, it might be necessary to balance the theological deficiency in this text with a New Testament passage that reinforces how the fate of the dead has changed forever because of Christ.

### **Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9 The Lord God will destroy death for ever.**

This prophecy has been fulfilled partially, but not completely. Christ has destroyed death in the sense that it no longer represents the end of human existence. However, he has not removed the scourge of death and mourning from our human experience. We must still confront the reality of our mortal nature, but we can do so with the hope of immortality to come. By

acknowledging this truth, the homilist can affirm the need to mourn, while also guiding the mourners to a deeper faith in resurrection.

**Lamentations 3:17-26 *It is good to wait in silence for the saving help of the Lord.***

This lamentation is especially appropriate after a tragic loss, where the mourners are left with more questions than answers. The author expresses profound feelings of grief, but also recalls God's past faithfulness as a reason to hope in even the bleakest situation. The exhortation to wait in silence and hope in the Lord is a powerful message to mourners who instinctively want to cry out, "Why did this have to happen?"