

THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST

Luke 24:39

INTRODUCTION:

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Palm Sunday, or the triumphant entry was such an act of Jesus. All of the events of the pass over week, was an attempt to bring into final focus all that he had said and done. And the cross of Jesus put things on the main line and the main track. This was the final act, of Jesus, upon this earth.

Now he is trying to help his disciples to understand that the train is underway. That the journey is all ready to leave the station as he shows them his wounds.

A standard course in First Aid classifies four types of wounds. Which can be remembered by the word "pail". P stands for puncture. A stands for abrasion. I for incision. And L for laceration.

The Lord Jesus suffered all four types. His hands and feet were punctured by nails.

S. N. April 6, 80 A.M.
Aron Park July 19, 89 P.M. Prayer Meeting

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His side was pierced incisively.

His back was torn and lacerated.

It is even more note worthy that in Heaven today he still bears the marks of those wounds.

The hymn writer wrote, "Crown him the Lord of love. Behold his hands and side. Rich wounds yet visible above. In beauty glorify. No angel in the sky can fully bear the sight. But downward bend his wondering eye at mysteries so bright."

I. MARKS OF RECOGNITION

People who have tragedies and accidents are often identified by scars. After the fierce battle, the queen of an ancient empire left her palace to hunt among the victims on the field for her warrior husband. Suddenly the torch dropped from her hand, as she cried, I have found him. I know him by his scars.

In Homer's odyssey the old nurse, Ulysses, found the final proof of her master's identity when she discovered the remembered scar on his leg.

Early that first Easter, rumors of Christ's resurrection began to circulate among the disciples, causing an uproar. And at evening, some of them assembled behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. And Jesus came and stood in the midst

V. 37
of them. Thinking him a ghost, they were terror stricken. But he reassured them by showing them his hands, his feet, and his side. Luke 24:39 and John 20:20. He invites them to handle and to see.

How often the disciples had seen those hands and touched them. And those hands have touched the blind eyes of people. Those hands had been used to break bread with them, to bless little children, to heal leprosy, and to even raise the dead. Now those hands bore nail prints. The wounds were marks of recognition.

How often they had seen those sandaled feet, walking along the dusty roads of Palestine, over the rocky hill of the Mt. of Olives down to Bethany. And now they look upon those same feet - they were pierced. The wounds were marks of recognition. He was the very same Jesus. They looked upon his brow. They knew how he looked. But now there were the marks of the thorns that had pierced that brow. And there was a scar. This was a wound, a mark of recognition.

He pulled aside his robe and showed them his side where the spear had pierced it and wounded him. This wound was a mark of recognition.

The disciples excitedly reported the amazing news to Thomas. Who was not present that first Sunday night. And Christians miss a great deal when they fail to assemble with other Christians in worship.

In a skeptical fashion, except I see his hands, the prints of the nails, and put my fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe, said Thomas. John 20:25.

The next Sunday, Thomas was present when our Lord appeared. Turning to

Thomas, Jesus invited him to reach his fingers into the palm and to touch his side. But Thomas immediately recognized those hands. And his doubt was turned into adoration as he exclaimed, "My Lord, and My God" John 20:28.

When Jesus returns to earth, in glory, he may be recognized by his wounds. Rev. 1:7. Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, wounded him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.

How will the saints recognize Christ in Heaven. Not by his pictures, for there are no reliable likenesses of him, in existence. Most paintings we have today -- as seen in Heaven in John's revelation, his vision focuses upon the exhalted Saviour. Lo, in the midst of the throne, stood a lamb as it had been slain. Rev. 5:6. The expression "as it had been slain" implies the marks of the slaying are still evident.

John is telling us that the wounds are still in the hands of Jesus.

That Scripture could rightly be read - he stood a lamb with the marks of his death. The lamb was none other than Jesus, our Lord. For a few sentences later, the lamb is referred to as having redeemed us to God. By thy blood, out of every kindred. V. 9. Undoubtedly one of the ways we will know Jesus in glory is by his hands, his wounds, by the marks.

Fannie Crosby wrote, I shall know him, I shall know him.
And redeemed by his side, I shall stand.
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Christ is dead in vain. Gal. 2:21. But because we could not possibly atone for our sins, no matter how moral we might be, Christ left Heaven to bear the penalty on the cross. That we might not perish, but that we might have everlasting life.

So beyond the physical suffering, there was this suffering. Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, carrying our sorrows, bruised for our iniquities, oppressed, brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was forsaken

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The scarred body of our Lord was exposed to main shocks and cruelties, during that crucifixion. Remember, first they scourged him. Now this was done by the Roman soldiers by order of their master, Pilate. Through the governor, who had retired from the scene while it was being inflicted. It took place, it would appear, on the platform where the trial had been held. And in the eyes of all. The victim was stripped and stretched against the pillar, or bent over a low post. His hands being tied, so that he had no means of defending himself, and the instrument of torture was sort of a cat of nine tails. With whips of iron or bone attached to the ends. Not only did the blows cut the skin and draw blood, but frequently the victim died in the midst of the operation. Some, have supposed that Pilate - out of consideration for Jesus, may have moderated the number of strokes. But on the other hand, his plan was of releasing him, and he wanted to show the Jews that he had suffered severely.

Now the inability of Jesus to bear his own cross to the place of execution was no doubt due chiefly to the exhaustion produced by the scourging and the wounds on his back. He was handled as a brute and by mockery, and tortured as an animal. And this was to the chief delight of those who watched them butcher his back in this way of scourging him.

Second, remember, that they treated him like a king. He must wear the purple. And they threw this over his shoulders. And if he is going to be a king he must have a crown. And so, no doubt, they stepped out in the park way where the palace stood and pulled some twigs from a tree, or bush. It happened to be a thorny one and it was all the better for them. They platted this into a crude crown and then they pressed this down on his head. They wounded his brow.

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I. MARKS OF RECOGNITION V. 40

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II. MARKS OF SUFFERING

V. 46

The wounds of Jesus will not only be marks by which we recognize him, but they will be marks that tell us indeed of the sufferings of the victim - of crucifixion.

Often the victim was nailed to the cross before it was lifted up. It was held on the cross on the ground while soldiers readied to pound the spike through his hand. The victim usually swore, squirmed, spat, and screamed, and struggled. Soon the blood would spurt as one hand was transfixed. And then the other hand. Then with legs pushed up, the knees out so that the soles of the feet were flat against the vertical beam, nails were banged through the feet. All this time, the victim gave vent to his pain by hurling oaths at his executors. To the amazement of the soldiers, Jesus offered no resistance. He went as a lamb to the slaughter. Instead of reviling, he prayed. Father forgive them, for they know not. Luke 23:34.

The cross was then lifted up and dropped into a hole in the ground with a jar that would jolt every bone in the body. Then would follow hours of agony.

Historians tell us that often severe local inflammation, coupled with bleeding, produced fever which was aggravated by the strain and crushing weight of the body. This, along with, a thirst that was unquenchable. The swarms of torturing insects and the relentless rays of the sun which beat down in the case of Jesus.

The arteries of head and stomach were surcharged with blood - resulting in a throbbing, pounding headache. Sometimes, convulsions would tear at the wounds, till with bodily forces and exhaustion, the victim would sink unto unconsciousness. The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths.

The scarred body of our Lord was exposed to main shocks and cruelties, during that crucifixion. Remember, first they scourged him. Now this was done by the Roman soldiers by order of their master, Pilate. Through the governor, who had retired from the scene while it was being inflicted. It took place, it would appear, on the platform where the trial had been held. And in the eyes of all. The victim was stripped and stretched against the pillar, or bent over a low post. His hands being tied, so that he had no means of defending himself, and the instrument of torture was sort of a cat of nine tails. With whips of iron or bone attached to the ends. Not only did the blows cut the skin and draw blood, but frequently the victim died in the midst of the operation. Some, have supposed that Pilate - out of consideration for Jesus, may have moderated the number of strokes. But on the other hand, his plan was of releasing him, and he wanted to show the Jews that he had suffered severely.

Now the inability of Jesus to bear his own cross to the place of execution was no doubt due chiefly to the exhaustion produced by the scourging and the wounds on his back. He was handled as a brute and by mockery, and tortured as an animal. And this was to the chief delight of those who watched them butcher his back in this way of scourging him.

Second, remember, that they treated him like a king. He must wear the purple. And they threw this over his shoulders. And if he is going to be a king he must have a crown. And so, no doubt, they stepped out in the park way where the palace stood and pulled some twigs from a tree, or bush. It happened to be a thorny one and it was all the better for them. They platted this into a crude crown and then they pressed this down on his head. They wounded his brow.

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and Eve who were driven from the Garden of Eden into this bleak world. Their doom, part of it was, that the ground would bring forth thorns and thistles. And thorns were the sign of the curse. That is their vanishment from God's presence. Of all the sad and painful consequences - this was awful. And the thorn is something that even through the winter time still lurks through beneath the leaves and the flowers, and will tear the clothes or the flesh of those who travel through the thicket.

The symbolism here is that the commission of Christ was to bear the curse of the world. And as it was lifted and placed on his head, he took it off the world. He bore our sins and our sorrows.

Besides the marks of suffering on his hands, his feet, his side, his brow, there was the suffering that was for us, Isa. 53:5 - he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes, we are healed. Those who try to gain Heaven by doing the best they can, by keeping the Golden Rule, or by keeping a few commandments, or by treating their neighbors right. Are really saying, see my hands - they are sufficient to earn my salvation. They are saying Christ, I don't need your nail pierced hands. Such an attitude insults Christ's death. Paul puts it if righteousness comes by the law, doing good works, then Christ is dead in vain. Gal. 2:21. But because we could not possibly atone for our sins, no matter how moral we might be, Christ left Heaven to bear the penalty on the cross. That we might not perish, but that we might have everlasting life.

So beyond the physical suffering, there was this suffering. Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, carrying our sorrows, bruised for our iniquities, oppressed, brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was forsaken

and unsupported.

The scars of Christ will not be blemished, but marks of beauty. As we look at these marks of suffering, I think of a little boy who asked his mother - why are your hands ugly and scarred. They are not pretty like the hands of other mothers. She replied, let me tell you a story. One day when you were a very little lad, you were playing in the back yard. And some boys in the neighborhood built a fire in our alley. But the boys left. You tottled up to the fire and fell. I heard your screams. I rushed out and beat out the flames with my hands. You were scarcely burned but my hands were burned and scarred terribly. That's why they are ugly. The little boy thought a moment, and then blurted out, Mother, your hands aren't ugly - they are beautiful.

The poet says they nailed those beautiful blessed hands, to the cruel bitter cross. And there in agony untold, he bore our shame and loss. Beautiful hands of Jesus, I hope someday to see. Those wonderful, loving, nail-scarred hands that were pierced on Calvary."

In Heaven, the perpetual reminder of our Saviour's suffering will remove the need for observing the Lord's Supper. The main reason for observing the Lord's Supper now is our short memories. They need periodic jogging, to remember the sacrifice of Christ. The symbols of broken bread, and red juice, are called his crucified body and shed blood. By these evidences are displayed the wounds.

III. THESE WOUNDS ARE A MARK OF VICTORY.

V. 47

When we think of wounds and scars, it indicates past battles, and often some

victories won. In the arena of spiritual conflict, the poet has put it -

Thy wounds, thy wounds, Lord Jesus
These deep deep wounds will tell
The sacrifice that frees us
From self, and death, and Hell.

These link thee once forever
For all who own thy grace
No hand, these bonds can sever
No hand, these scars erase.

If Satan should come up to a Christian and appear before God in Heaven and say, look at that Christian. Look at his many sins. How can you say that he is a child of yours. The Lord Jesus will merely have to lift up his hands and the father would see the marks and remember Calvary, where he shed his blood for the remission of sin. And Satan is defeated.

Napoleon looked over the map of Europe with his lt. He pointed to various nations - we can conquer these easily. But he put his finger on the British Isles, and exclaimed, but for this red dot, we could conquer the whole world. But for the red dot of Calvary, Satan might have conquered this whole world. But we need, like the hymn writer who wrote, that my God is reconciled. His pardoning voice I hear. He owns me for his child. I can no longer fear. Five bleeding wounds he bears. Received on Calvary. He poured effectual prayers. They strongly plead for me. Forgive him, oh forgive, they cry. Nor let that ransomed sinner die.

A lady who was seriously ill in the hospital was visited by a minister. At the end of the visit she suggested that she might like to confess her sins. Unable to see very well, she asked him to put his hand in hers. She felt one side

and turned it over. And gently pushed it aside - and said, the hand that forgives my sin must have nail prints in it. The hands of Christ seem very frail. They were broken by a nail. But they reached Heaven at last. Whom those frail broken hands hold fast. So said John Moreland.

To see the wounds of Christ, is to see the evidence of your atonement. For your personal sins. This is the mark of guarantee that you will have victory. These scars and these wounds will prove to help you to recognize him and to know him.

IV. THE MARKS OF OWNERSHIP

V. 50 - (Hands - Blinded Them)

The wounds of Christ suggest that we have been purchased by the blood of Christ. We are no longer our own.

I. Cor. 6:19-20 - What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you. For ye are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body. Peter also, likewise teaches, for as much as ye know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold - but with the precious blood of Christ.

The person who names the name of Christ can no longer do the things he desires. Can no longer walk the way he wants to walk. He is owned by Christ. His tongue, his eyes, his hands, his feet. And the wounds of Jesus are a reminder of his ownership.

There is a story of some men playing cards and gambling on the train. They needed a fourth player and they asked the fellow sitting nearby to join them.

Politely he said, he declined. And after awhile without success, they approached him and he said why do you refuse to play. He said, I have no hands. What are those things dangling by your side. They are hands, he admitted. But he added, they are not my hands. Two years ago, I gave myself to Christ. He owns me now. These hands belong to him and he doesn't wish them to gamble.

This man like the apostle Paul in Gal. 5:17 said, from henceforth, let no man trouble me. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. I bear his wounds, his mark upon my body.

Think of it - Jesus took time that evening to stop by with those disciples and to speak with them and to show them his hands and his feet.

An orphan boy lived with his grandmother. Now one night the house caught fire. The grandmother tried to rescue the little boy asleep upstairs that he might not perish in the flames. A crowd gathered around the burning house. The boys cries for help were heard above the crackling noise of the blaze. No one seemed to know what to do. The front of the house was a mass of flames. Suddenly a stranger rushed from the crowd and circled to the back. Where he supplied an iron pipe that reached the second floor. Hand over hand he climbed the hot pipe - reached his upstairs window, disappeared for a moment, and reappeared with the boy in his arms. Mid the cheers of the crowd he climbed down the hot pipe as the boy hung around his neck.

Weeks later at a public meeting that was held in the town hall to decide who would get custody of the boy and where he would be placed. Each person who wanted the boy was permitted to speak briefly. The first man spoke, I have a

big farm. Every boy needs the out of doors. The second man expounded the advantages that he could give the boy. I am a teacher. I have a large library. We would get a good education. Others spoke. Finally the richest man in the community said, I'm wealthy. I could give the boy everything mentioned tonight - farm, books, education, plenty besides - including money to travel. I would like to have him live in my home.

The chairman asked if there was anyone else to say a word. From the back seat rose the stranger who had slipped in unnoticed to the hall and as he walked forward to the front. Deep suffering showed on his face. He reached the front of the room. He stood directly in front of the little boy whose custody was being decided. Slowly the stranger removed his hands from his pockets. A gasp went up from the crowd. The little boy whose eyes had been focused on the floor, til now, looked up. The man's hands were scarred terrible. Suddenly the boy let out a cry of recognition. Here was the man who had saved his life. His hands were scarred from climbing up and down the hot pipe. With a leap, he threw himself around the stranger's neck. And held on for life.

The farmer arose and left. The teacher left. The rich man, and everyone departed. Leaving the boy and his rescuer who had won him without a word. Those marred hands spoke more effectively than words.

Today there are many interests - who are trying to get your devotion. Young people and older people alike, are challenged by the call of money, by education, by fame, by sports, by pleasure. And a host of other voices. But let us never forget that down through the corridors of the century, walks one who by merely raising his hands reminds us that he has a claim upon us. Those hands are nail pierced. They speak more eloquently than 10,000 sermons today. They say, I gave my life for thee. My precious blood I shed. That

thou might ransomed be. And quickened from the dead. I gave, I gave - my life for thee. What hast thou given for me.

I'm wondering today, as we look at the wounds of Christ, so vividly upon that lacerated back, that pierced brow, those punctured hands and open side. Who will place his life in the nail-scarred hands this hour.

The concluding part of the story of our message today is V. 52 - and they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And V. 53 - and they continually were in the temple, praising and blessing God.

- 52 - worshipped -

53 - continued -

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