

Why the Eternal Scars in Jesus' Body?

There "stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6)

By Matthew Black Text: John 20 March 28, 2010

Introduction: Open your Bibles to John 20. Today is Palm Sunday. It is a day of remembrance. It is the day we celebrate the substitution of Jesus on the Cross for our sins. The just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. In a little while we are going to commemorate the Lord's Table to remember that "by His stripes we are healed". This morning we are going to consider the question: "Why are there Eternal Scars in Jesus' Body?"

Worry is a Terrible Thing

Worry and fear are sometimes inevitable and uncontrollable in our hearts.

- ❖ Some here today worry about money.
- ❖ If you are married, you may fear losing your family or perhaps you fear losing your job. What do you worry about?
- ❖ Perhaps you worry about relationships with parents.
- ❖ Some here when sickness comes you worry about some awful illness. What if I get cancer?

Definition of Worry

Webster defines worry as: "mental distress or agitation resulting from concern usually for something impending or anticipated". Worry is deadly because it brings the worst possibilities of the future into today. 90% of what we worry about never occurs. Nonetheless, if you are breathing, you probably have a battle with worry.

I want to introduce you to someone who will do all your worrying for you. Actually He never worries, because He directs the future. *We were not meant to go it alone.* David says in **Psalm 56:3**, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." What do you do when your world is turned upside down?

Disciples' Worrisome Situation

The disciples faced a similar situation. Thomas was absent when the Lord appeared to the other disciples.

Solution: the Nail Scars

To bring Thomas comfort and faith, Christ did something extraordinary. *Do you remember what Christ did for Thomas?* Thomas's faith was *wavering*—seriously wavering. We don't call him "doubting Thomas" for nothing! Christ affirmed Thomas's faith in a very, very unique way. He showed him His wounds. Today, tomorrow, and for eternity, the nail scars in Jesus' hands and feet and the scar on His side, will strengthen our faith and will steady all our fears. The wounds in Christ's Body

In John 20, Jesus appeared to His disciples. We read in **John 20:21**, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Look at **verse 24**, "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach

hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and **be not faithless, but believing.** 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed."

Thomas had a knot in the pit of his stomach. He was filled with worry, anxiety, and fear. Yet Jesus overcame all doubt in Thomas by showing him the nail scars. We sang about those scars this morning—"wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified".¹ Do you realize that the only man-made things in heaven are the scars in Jesus' body?

Jesus Christ in Heaven has a perfect glorified body, but has something man-made that marks Him. He has the scars in His hands and feet. **He has them now and He will have them always!**

- A. We see Jesus' Wounds at the Resurrection.** Look over at **Luke 24:38-40**. After His resurrection, the disciples were astonished to see Him. "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his hands and his feet*". We see Jesus' wounds *after* His resurrection.
- B. We also see Jesus' Wounds at the Second Coming.** As a matter of fact, the prophet Zechariah pictures the Lord Jesus as He's coming again and people behold him and they say "What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he [Christ] shall answer, *Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends*" (**Zechariah 13:6**). **Revelation 1:7** tells us the those who pierced Him shall wail! "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen".
- C. And indeed, we are going to see Jesus' Wounds for all Eternity.** He still bears those signs of His suffering, and over in the book of Revelation the Apostle John said that amidst the congregation in heaven, there "stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (**Revelation 5:6**). Christ still bears His wounds for us as an eternal reminder of His love for us.

Why the wounds?

The nail scarred hands give us one overwhelming message of comfort: **Jesus is our Savior**. You are not the Savior. I am not the Savior. Getting the right job is not the Savior. Getting the right spouse is not the Savior. We get the greener grass syndrome don't we? We cope with pain by imagining that things could be better if only FILL IN THE BLANK. That scenario is really idolatry of the heart. It's a control, manipulation thing. If only! No, if you are saved, then you already have a Savior. Your Savior is Jesus.

This morning I want to look at three simple truths about our wonderful Savior as we look at His nail scarred hands:

- ❖ Jesus is a **compassionate** Savior – He *wants* to save me and help me.
- ❖ Jesus is a **capable** Savior – He is *able* to save me and help me.
- ❖ Jesus is a **conquering** Savior – He *will* save me and help me.

Christ could easily have erased those wounds from His body. He could have removed all those marks of His suffering when He rose from the grave. But He did not. Instead, there were the

¹ Crown Him with Many Crowns.

nail wounds in His hands and feet, and there was the gaping wound in His side. Why do they remain? It is an eternal reminder that Jesus is the Savior! When you look in heaven you'll never have to guess who the Savior is. We will say: Look! There stands "a Lamb as it had been slain" (**Revelation 5:6**).

You may come to an impossible situation and life and wonder: Does Jesus care? Look to Jesus! "be not faithless, but believing" (**John 20:27**).

- I. Look to the wounds of Christ and you will see that He is a **Compassionate Savior**. Jesus' wounds are visible for all eternity to bring us the everlasting comfort of God. Jesus cares! Jesus is not aloof to your sin or your trial or your pain. He cares.

His wounds tell me beyond the shadow of any doubt that Jesus cares about your suffering. He saw your sin curse, and **He took your sin curse upon Himself**. God didn't just tell us that He loved us. He "so loved the world that He gave..." He gave His only Son to perish so that we would not have to perish. What love wondrous love is this?

*What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.*

*When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.*

*To God and to the Lamb Who is the great "I Am";
While millions join the theme, I will sing.*

*And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be;
And through eternity, I'll sing on.*

The God who created all things, who knew no pain, worshipped by the angels, came not only to die, but to **suffer** and die!

Transition: So often we look at our circumstances and we feel abandoned. We feel as if Jesus does not care. That is the farthest thing from the truth. Jesus is a compassionate Savior. He is a compassionate God.

A. Consider the **compassion of Jesus** while he was on this earth.

1. Think of His compassion toward **Mary**. Think about the loving heart of Jesus. You may think no one cares about your circumstances. You are wrong. Jesus cares. **John 11:32-35**, "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 33 ¶ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 Jesus wept."

Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead in a few moments, but He felt the pain in that time and place, and He wept with Mary. Jesus knows very soon He will remove the curse and the pain of this world, but right now, Jesus weeps with you.

2. His compassion for the *multitudes*. Jesus was often “moved with compassion”. **Matthew 9:36**, “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them,”
3. His compassion toward *the rich young ruler*. When Jesus looked upon the rich young ruler who asked what he must do for eternal life, we read in **Mark 10:21**, “Then Jesus beholding him loved him”. The man went away without coming to Christ, yet Jesus loved him.
4. His compassion over *the city of Jerusalem*. Jesus when he came to the city of Jerusalem, He wept over it. Luke 19:41, “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it”. He says in **Luke 13:34**, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”

Transition: Those prints in His hands tell us that God suffered on the Cross, but we read throughout the Scriptures of God’s deep love for those who run to Him for refuge.

B. God’s character is one of compassion.

1. **God’s compassion is so great that the very definition of His nature is LOVE.** John says **1 John 4:16**, “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” We have a compassionate God!
2. **God’s compassion is so great that He cries for you like a woman in labor.** **Isaiah 42:14-16**, God speaks of Himself and He says “I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman”. **Verse 16**, “And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them”. God cries like a woman about to give birth. We have a compassionate God!

Now, we know that God sings over His children with joy (**Zephaniah 3:17**), but have you ever thought of God crying?

3. **Indeed, God’s compassion is so great that Isaiah tells us that God is afflicted in all our afflictions.** God says in **Isaiah 63:9** speaking of His people, “In all their affliction he was afflicted”. When God's people were afflicted God Himself was afflicted. We have a compassionate God!
4. **God’s compassion is so great that He actually hurts for us.** God speaks in **Jeremiah 31:20** of that tribe of Ephraim and he says, “Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.” We have a compassionate God!

Explanation: What does that mean? When God says “my bowels are troubled for him”, He speaks of the pit of the stomach. Any one of you who has a child that has done wrong and gone wrong - and everybody who has a child - has at one time or another has been

sick in the pit of his stomach—you hurt for that child. And God says: “*I hurt*”. God says “my bowels are troubled for him”, “My stomach hurts for Ephraim”. And you are here today, and perhaps you think God doesn’t care for you. God says He does care for you, and His stomach hurts for you.

5. **God’s compassion is so great that He sent His own Son to suffer crucifixion for you.** Christ’s wounds also tell us *that the pain of man has become the pain of God*. They speak to us of the greatness of His love.

Application: Now, when we have pain we normally do not choose it, and sometimes we can do absolutely nothing about it, but God *chose* pain. And if God wanted to He could do something about His because He is God, and He can do anything He pleases. And yet, God has *chosen* to suffer.

This is the God who comes down to be crucified for you. He goes up with the nail prints in His hands. He comes again with the nail prints in His hands. For all eternity He ever lives to intercede for us, with the nail prints in His hands. Look to the nail scarred hands and feet. You will see the compassion of God. He’s a compassionate Savior!

Transition: Look to those wounds and see that Jesus is a compassionate Savior.

- II. Second, the wounds of Jesus remain to remind us that He is a **Capable Savior**. Thomas would not believe unless he saw the nail prints in the hands of the living Christ! He saw the dead Christ, but He wanted to see the living Christ who had conquered death.

Christ not only cares about your suffering, He has the power to do something about it.

- A. First understand His **Power**. We cannot save ourselves. Jesus is the Savior.

Would you imagine Jesus right now upon his throne—imagine Him on the throne, see him “in beauty glorified”, and see those scars in His hands. And before the throne of God, He is **interceding** for you with *infinite power*. “Be not faithless but believing!”

Look first at **Hebrews 4:15-16**, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” It is so great, that you can run boldly into His presence with any need! We ought to be knocking down angels on a continual basis! **He’s a capable Savior!**

Look at **Hebrews 7:25-28**, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” Christ is able! **He’s a capable Savior!**

We will all have God given glorified bodies, but **Jesus will bear man-made wounds on our behalf**. Why? Because those wounds plead before the Father that though He should never

accept us, ***we are welcomed***. We sit like Mephibosheth, unworthy, at the table with the King of Kings! Why? Because of those nail scarred hands. They are our entrance pass. Those “rich wounds” are always “yet visible above in beauty glorified” because Jesus intercedes for us. He is our faithful High Priest, forever!

One writer said, “When he rises up to pray for his people, he needs not speak a word; he lifts his hands before his Father's face; he makes bare his side, and points to his feet. These are the orators with which he pleads with God—these wounds.”²

- B. Consider Christ's **Purpose**. Christ came to save you. He came to deliver you from the power of sin. He's not simply trying to make you happy. He's come to make you holy. God's way is best and it works out for the best and for the good.

Romans 8:28-29, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son”.

When pain comes, it is not because God wants to do us harm, but to do us good, and to drive us to Him. Don't try to heal yourself. You cannot. You must run to the nail pierced hands. You must weep at the nail pierced feet. Jesus Christ will bring joy in the journey. He is the shelter in the time of storm. He allows pain to draw you to Himself.

When you put your faith and trust in Christ, those hands guide you and cover you from **all harm**. Everything that happens to you is good. No evil can touch you without His permission. You are covered in the nail pierced hands of Jesus. Do you fear? Let the perfect love of Jesus cast your fear away. “No one shall pluck them out of my hand” (**John 10:28**). Those hands are now and forever nail pierced hands.

Transition: Christ's wounds tell us of His **compassion**. They tell us of His **capability**. Finally, they tell us of His **conquering power**.

- III. Second, the wounds of Jesus remain to remind us that He is a **Conquering Savior**. Those wounds are Christ's everlasting **battle scars** to remind you that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I remind you that those were scars after the resurrection, those were not raw and bleeding wounds were wounds that had been healed.

The Bible says in **Isaiah 53:5**, speaking of Jesus, “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.” Dear brother and sister, **there is victory in those wounds**. He's saying it is done, it is paid for, and for all eternity we will look to those wounds and know: “It is finished!” He's conquered sin, death and hell! Let us look to Jesus and live for that day when all His enemies will be put under His feet.

- ❖ Jesus is a **compassionate** Savior – He **wants** to save me and help me.
- ❖ Jesus is a **capable** Savior – He is **able** to save me and help me.
- ❖ Jesus is a **conquering** Savior – He **will** save me and help me.

Conclusion: Fanny Crosby was blind. But she said she would know who it was that was the Savior by the prints of the nails in His hands. What a joy and comfort the eternal scars in Jesus' body are. Let us sing hymn 573, “I Shall Know Him” by the prints of the nails in His hands.

² Charles H. Spurgeon.