

## **AFTER THE PASSION**

Answering Questions People Have After Seeing  
Mel Gibson's movie: The Passion of the Christ

Pt. 7

### **SCARRED!**

Why Does Christ Still Bear the Wounds?

**Like 24:32-40a**

*"And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup>saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.*

*<sup>36</sup>Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup>But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. <sup>38</sup>And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

*<sup>40</sup>When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.*

*<sup>41</sup>But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled..."*

**John 21:24-31**

*<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."*

*So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."*

*<sup>26</sup>And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup>Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*

*<sup>28</sup>And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"*

*<sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

*<sup>30</sup>And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup>but these are written*

***that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

#### Opening Remarks

This is my last in a series of seven messages geared toward a further explanation of the Passion of Christ. I prepared these messages so that they would be delivered after Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, came out Ash Wednesday, 2004.

Mel Gibson himself confessed to his own obsession with Christ's Passion, which became the impetus for his making a movie that depicted Christ's sufferings in more realistic a way than anyone up to this point. During interviews, he has said,

***"Life is hard, and we all get wounded by it. I was no exception. I went to the wounds of Christ in order to cure my wounds. And when I did that – through reading, meditating and praying – I began to see what He really went through. I began to understand it like as I never had before, even though I had heard the story so many times...If he loved me that much, how could I not have hope in Him?"<sup>1</sup>***

***"I went to the wounds of Christ in order to cure my wounds."<sup>2</sup>***

***"My wounds were healed by His wounds; I had to tell the story of those wounds."<sup>3</sup>***

Now I am curious, as I hope you are too, why Jesus wanted the disciples to see those wounds in His hands and feet and side? The Bible plainly tells us that the holes from the crucifixion nails were visible in His hands and feet, and that in his side there remained the gaping wound from the spear that was thrust through his heart. We are told that He intentionally exposed his wounds or scars twice after his resurrection to encourage faith and destroy doubt. The first time was before his disciples, but Thomas was absent, no doubt experiencing a crises of faith, and the second time before his disciples with Thomas present (no doubt due to the others going out and finding him and bringing him back into the fold. He encouraged Thomas to ***"Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."***

Now this Resurrection Sunday morning I would like to draw your attention to the this simple fact, that our Lord Jesus Christ, when he rose again from the dead had in his body the wounds or scars of his passion. I don't know that "scars" would be a good word for them because they appear to still be open wounds that have not begun to close and never seem to close throughout eternity. Either they remain open wounds that never close, yet do not bleed or seep fluids of any kind,

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<sup>1</sup> Decision Magazine, March 2004 edition; Published by The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN

<sup>3</sup> Decision Magazine, p. 8

or they are a different kind of scar meant to be seen and probed with the fingers and hands. But whether scars or wounds, Jesus is raised with them. And frankly, I find that very unusual, if not troubling as in – ***“Something is wrong here.”***

Think about it: What are scars doing on a resurrected body? They should have been removed – erased! - from His body – so that there would be no signs of wounds or scars or any such thing that would indicate in the slightest way, that He had suffered.

But, no! Instead, He holds out His wounded extremities for all to see the pierced hands and feet, and the open side. What was His reason(s) for this? There seems to me to be no necessity for it. What, then, were the reasons for this display? These were the questions I had when meditating on these passages of scripture and I would like to share with you some of the exciting things I discovered in my probing of the scars and wounds of our resurrected and ascended Lord. After all, it is ***“by [those wounds] we are healed.”***

I'd like to deal with 3 questions that are raised by Christ's continuing to bear these nail and spear wounds/scars in His new, resurrected and glorified body:

- **First**, What was the point in His drawing the disciples attention to His wounds that first resurrection morning? What impact did these wounds in Christ's hands, feet and side have upon the disciples and 8 days later on Thomas, often times called “doubting Thomas”?
- **Secondly**, why is it that even though Jesus Christ has since ascended into heaven, and has sat down at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, that He still continues to bear in His body the visible wounds of the cross in that glorious heavenly environment?
- And, then, **thirdly**, is there any lesson for us modern day disciples in the fact that Jesus Christ still bears those visible wounds in His hands, feet and side, and most likely will continue to do so for all eternity? I think there is.

## **I. WHY DID CHRIST DRAW ATTENTION TO HIS WOUNDS?**

### ***A. They Proved It Was Really Him***

1. Luke tells us that when Jesus appeared to the disciples, they were terrified, just as they were on the sea of Galilee when he came towards them walking on water. Just as they did then, when Jesus appears to them in the room where they were hiding in because they were afraid of the Jews, they were at first terrified that they were being haunted by a ghost. Luke 24:37 says –

***37They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.”***

2. In order to alleviate their fears and prove to them that he was none other than Jesus in the flesh, their friend, teacher, and resurrected savior and Lord, He tells them ***“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”***
3. So you see, it was to establish his identity, that he was the very same Jesus whom they had followed, whom at last they had deserted, whom they had beheld afar off crucified and slain. They saw Him tortured, nailed to the cross and die. They knew that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimethea had taken his body down from the cross and carried it to Joseph’s garden tomb in the gloom of the evening, rolling a huge stone over it’s entrance; and now, this very same Christ who now was standing before them, stretches out his scarred hands and feet showing them his wounds that they might know that against all hope, Jesus was alive, risen from the dead. They were none other than the seal of his sufferings. He was the same person; the five wounds testified to that.
4. Doesn’t this make sense to you, beloved? If there was no visible evidence on the body of our Savior of his horrible ordeal at the hands of the Roman soldiers, it is probable and understandably so, that his disciples would have been so blinded by grief and so traumatized by the shock of the violence, cruelty, chaos and frenzy of the crucifixion of our Lord, that they would have doubted his identity and fail to recognize him. Remember, etched indelibly into their souls was the last state they beheld their Lord: mangled, bloodied, shredded, swollen, pierced and ravaged by dehydration and the ordeal of hanging on the cross for 6 hours. His once robust physique, would have been badly shriveled and shrunken.
5. Have you known a friend who has undergone an extreme change in their external appearance due to intense suffering and the ordeal of rehabilitation and therapy? When you saw them, afterward, did you quickly recognize them, or did it take you a moment, and even then, you weren’t sure? If they hadn’t taken the initiative to stop you and greet you, you might have passed them by without recognizing them.
6. This is true in the positive too. Seeing someone who you knew when they were blind, or crippled or in some other way handicapped or ill, knowing them only in that state, and then seeing them after a kind of extreme makeover – whether it was a loss of a great amount of weight, or plastic surgery, or just a

couple of years of health and wellness, you didn't recognize them and found it difficult to believe they were who they said they were. You needed further proof that they were who they said they were, and only then, could you totally give way to joy even in the midst of doubt that bordered on wonderment.

7. So then, there had to be some way to help the disciples **ID** His body so that they could connect the dots - that he was the same Jesus they knew and loved.
8. Also, when Jesus rose, His body was flesh and bone and had miraculous powers; it was capable of passing through solid objects. Notice what Luke tells us, although the doors to the room where they were staying were shut, Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of them.
9. This does not mean that Jesus was a phantom, ghost or specter. He was not just a spirit meaning immaterial; His was a real body such as the kind we are going to have in heaven at the resurrection of the dead. We may call it a spiritual body in so much that it's material substance was changed into something incorporeal yet with materiality.
- 10.** I stress this fact because one of the first heresies to arise in Christianity was called **Docetism**. The **Docetists** attempted to teach that Jesus Christ did not really suffer on the cross; he did not really suffer all the pangs of human life like we do. He only **appeared to suffer** (from the Greek *doceo*, appear, seem). He only seemed to be human.
- 11.** The founder of Docetism, **Cerinthus**, was one of the apostle John's major opponents in the early days of the Christian church. That is why John's eyewitness testimony along with the other apostles, was so important. Docetism was condemned as heretical. Christ indeed was fully God and fully man. As Peter says, echoing Isaiah, "**by his wounds we are healed.**" By the wounds of Him who is both Lord and Christ, with a flesh and bone body completely bled out, we find our healing.
12. But, now, think! Christ, as touching his humanity, went through two transformations: the first when his strong and healthy body and rugged features were marred through beatings and scourging and nailing and piercing, more than any other man, so that he was unrecognizable in the end; and the second transformation, when his mutilated and marred body was transformed into that powerful, honorable, immortal, resurrected body, so is it too much for us to conceive that his appearance would be so changed, that the disciples, whose memories of him were haunted by the way they had last seen

him, would scarcely know him in his glorious body as it stood there, suddenly, amongst them?

13. They were looking at him square in the face, and didn't believe it was him. There was a majesty about him that most of the disciples had never seen. Peter, James, and John, had seen him transfigured, when his garments were whiter than any detergent could make them; but the rest of the disciples had only seen him as a man of sorrows; they had not seen him as the glorious Lord, and, therefore, they would be apt to doubt whether he was the same.
14. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 gives us a clue as to Jesus resurrected and glorified body:

***<sup>35</sup>But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"***

***<sup>36</sup>How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.***

***<sup>42</sup>So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup>it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup>it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.***

***If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup>So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being" ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup>The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. <sup>48</sup>As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup>And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.***

15. So then, are we to be raised to receive a new, immortal, glorious, honorable, super-powerful resurrected body – scars and all? Are handicapped people here, going to be raised with handicapped bodies there? Are disfigured people, amputated people, people with birth defects and who have been maimed, going to receive bodies that carry these same disfigurements? Such a thing would be ludicrous, for the resurrection of the dead will be a great day of hope for those who die in the faith for the very reason Paul just wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15. But Christ was raised with his former wounds still scarring his body so that He

would forever be identified with His passion, and be identified by the people He purchased by shedding His blood as a kinsman redeemer.

**16.** So, at first they were not able to recognize Jesus due to their grief-stricken state and disillusionment. But oh, good and gracious Lord!, then he stretches out those wounded hands, and lifts the hem of his garment to show those wounded feet, and parts his robe to show the wound in his side so big and opened that Thomas could stick his whole hand inside it, and that was all they needed: these were marks which they could not dispute, which unbelief itself could not doubt. And they all were convinced and confessed that he was the Lord; and even doubting Thomas was constrained to cry, "**My Lord and my God!**" at the very sight of them.<sup>4</sup>

**17.** So this was the reason for Christ presenting His wounds for all to see that Resurrection Sunday morning two-thousand years ago. He wanted them to make no mistake about it. It was really Him. "**Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.**"

## **II. WHY DOES OUR ASCENDED LORD STILL BEAR THE FIVE WOUNDS?**

### **A. As a Testimony to the Angels in Heaven**

1. It may well be that the wounds of the ascended and enthroned Christ will be a theme of eternal wonder to the angels in heaven.
2. The mighty Angels were there when Jesus voluntarily laid aside His divine glory, and left His throne in heaven by the Father's side, and they went with Him as far as they could go, singing, "**Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth.**"<sup>5</sup>
3. Some of them had watched him through his pilgrimage, for "**he was seen of angels.**"<sup>6</sup>
4. Some protected the Christ child warning Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt<sup>7</sup>, and no doubt had a hand in making sure that all who sought the child's life were dead before appearing again to Joseph and telling him it was safe to return.<sup>8</sup>
5. Some were dispatched to help him and strengthen him after his 40 day fast and warfare with the devil in the desert<sup>9</sup>, and a powerful angel was there during his ordeal in the garden of

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<sup>4</sup> John does not specifically say he ever acted on Jesus' invitation to touch his wounds and believe. It appears that the sight of them was enough to overcome his unbelief and elicit his great confession.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 1:14

<sup>6</sup> 1 Timothy 3:16

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 2:13

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 2:19-20

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 4:11

Gethsemane, ministering to him and strengthening him again before the rigors of the cross<sup>10</sup>.

6. **Illustration:** At a local barbeque establishment in San Luis Obispo, there is a mural painted on the wall. A little girl is looking intently at an adult's hand. We don't see the adult just his wounded hand, and the little girl asks, "What happened to your hand, mister?" The wound in question is of course a nail mark and the hand belongs to our Lord.
7. Listen: after all was accomplished, and Jesus returned to His heavenly throne and coronation, don't you doubt for a moment that the innumerable company of the heavenly host crowded around him, bowed before him in adoration, and then, in awe and wonder, asked the holy question, "***Why are the wounds still in Your hands, feet and side, Oh Lord?***"
8. Yes, yes, Jesus made his wounds visible for all the Angelic host in heaven to see and behold Him who suffered to pay the redemption price, and they could see the wounds which served as a receipt for the full payment of the sin debt of all who would believe, and thus learn something about the attributes of God, such as mercy, longsuffering, redeeming love and covenant grace, not revealed to them before. His wounds thus served as a testimony to the Angels of His redemptive sacrifice for us unworthy, unthankful, rebels on the cross. This is cause for great wonder and deep thought amongst those who know not what it is like to fall, and be besmirched and stained and scarred by sin.
9. I can readily imagine that the sight of those scars caused them to lift their songs higher, would prolong their shouts of triumph longer, and would cause them to adore him with a rapture of wonderment, such as all of heaven had never felt or heard before. And I do not doubt that every time they looked upon his hands, and beheld the crucified One exalted by his Father's side, that they are gripped with fresh rapture and wonder at the wounds that sealed His finished work on the cross, and His victory over sin, death and the devil.
10. Revelation 5 tells us that Christ wounds are the impetus for new songs never before written and sung, and of a new theme to the songs never before thought of until the appearance of Christ and his wounds. Their very appearance causes even heavenly worship to increase, expand, and life the souls of heaven higher (read).
11. Isn't it time we reverse the trend in Christian music and praise and worship songs, that for years centered on our need, or on love or healing, or whatever, and start writing more songs about

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 22:43

the scars and wounds that forever mark the body of our resurrected and ascended Lord? To this day, one of the most popular favorite and often requested songs in our church is “The Nails in Your Hands.”

12. Our ascended Lord bears the five wounds also, because –

*B. They Serve as His Kingly Wardrobe*

1. Christ wears these scars in his body in heaven as his ornaments. The wounds of Christ are his glories, they are his jewels and his precious things.
2. Beloved, these are to Jesus his ornaments, his royal jewels, his fair array. He does not care for the splendor and pomp of earthly kings.
3. The wounds from the thorny crown are his diadem such as no monarch ever wore. Jesus Christ finds such beauties in his wounds that he will not renounce them, but he will wear them honorably as His courtly dress.

*C. They are also His Trophies and Medals of Honor.*

1. The wounds of Christ in heaven are not only his royal ornaments and jewels: they are his trophies—the trophies of his love and victory. Have you never seen a soldier with a gash across his forehead or in his cheek? Why every soldier will tell you the wound in battle is no disfigurement—it is his honor. If a person receives a wound in a victory, then it is an honorable thing. They are his medals of honor
2. Now, Jesus Christ has the medals of honor in his flesh and glory in his eyes. And He has other kinds of trophies too: The Bible tells us He has divided the spoil with the strong: he has freed the captives, and led them away from their prison doors; he has wrenched the keys of life and death, hell and Hades from the lord of the pit; he has redeemed for himself a host that no man can number, who are all the trophies of his victories!
3. Ah, but those wounds - they are the memorials of the fight, and thus serve as trophies and medals of honor, too.
4. Why else does our ascended Lord bear the wounds of His cross in heaven? Because -

*D. They are Proof of His Victory Over Death and the Grave*

1. Death was allowed to come upon Christ, and have him for as long as it could hold him. But death could not keep hold of him for long.
  - a. Christ was **sinless** (death and hell had no legal basis to hold him), **blessed** (was not subject to the penalty incurred by those accursed) and had **life in himself**-

(when Death prepared to pounce on Christ's soul and damn him forever as one of hells imprisoned occupants, he got the shock of his life; period. For John tells us that "in Him was life, and that life is the light of every man." Wheresoever He goes, does He not give life to the dead? Jesus even said that **"the time is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live!"**

- b. And thus, Death itself was soundly defeated, for Christ has destroyed it, by the sacrifice of himself; he has put it away, ruining it's chambers in which it held the souls of the righteous dead. Never again will a righteous saint who dies in the faith go to Sheol, the abode of the dead, Abraham's Bosom, Paradise, etc...but now, because Jesus has made a new and living way through His shed blood, as soon as a Christian ceases living their mortal life, they are present with the Lord awaiting the resurrection of the dead and their new, unscarred, uncorrupted bodies.
- c. Oh what a hope! Oh what consolation we have at a Christian funeral. I had a friend a few years ago whose body was bent and mangled by Cerebral Palsy. It took him a half hour to tie his shoes. Life was difficult for him on levels I never even give a thought to. But oh, how he loved Jesus. And the day I heard he had passed away I rejoiced in my heart for him. Truly. Because in a flash, the angelic escort came and together they walked to heaven, to be present with the Lord awaiting with gleeful anticipation the arrival of the resurrection of the dead, and the greatest Christmas present he will ever get – a glorious, honorable, immortal body to match the wonderful heart God had given him. It is because of those scars in the hands, feet and side of our Lord that we can cry out at every Christian funeral, **"Oh death where is Your victory? Oh grave where is Your sting?"**<sup>11</sup>

*E. Another reason why Jesus wears his wounds is, that when he intercedes he may use them as powerful advocates.*

1. When he rises up to pray for his people, he doesn't need to speak a word; he lifts his hands before his Father's face; he makes bare his side, and points to

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55

- his feet. These are the defense attorneys with which he pleads with God—these wounds.
2. All He has to do is show his hands and feet and side. The Bible tells us that the heavenly Father always hears the prayers of Jesus Christ. His blood cries out and is heard, because His wounds plead and prevail.

*F. They Serve as Signs and Evidence of Condemnation of Unbelievers*

1. There is another reason, a sobering one, as to why the wounds of Christ are still visible, as if fresh. It is this. **Christ is coming to judge the world.** Christ has with himself today the accusers of his enemies imprinted in His wounds.
2. Every time that Christ's wounds are made visible in heaven, all Christ haters and unbelievers stand accused already. The sin of mocking Christ, and rejecting him, is brought before the mind of the Most High and written in the books and one day there will be an accounting.
3. On that day when Christ shall come the second time to judge the world in righteousness, seated on his great white throne, those wounded hands and feet and side of his shall be the terror of the universe for all men **"... shall look on him whom they have pierced,"** and they shall mourn for their sins and the arrogant foolishness of their stubborn unbelief.
4. Because they would not mourn with hope over their sins in the day of salvation, they shall mourn with bitter, remorseful regret on that day and throughout eternity.
5. When the multitude is gathered together, at the judgment seat of Christ, He shall judge the nations. At that time He will not have a need to summon prosecuting attorneys to charge them, or witnesses to accuse them, for **His own wounds are his witnesses;** His own side bears their handiwork. You murderers, put your fingers in the holes in my hands and feet, and your hand in my side, for in them you will find all the evidence I need to condemn you to hell? You sons and daughters of an evil and corrupt generation, look on those wounds: did you not pierce me with your unbelief and disinterest? Did you not nail me to the tree when you decided to be numbered with

those who refused to believe in me? For they are your fathers and you are their children, children of unbelief. Behold these holes in my hand, and this wound in my side; these are swift witnesses against you to condemn you!

6. But no doubt that some will protest in that day and say they most certainly did not have any part in the crucifixion of Christ. But let me assure you that His blood shall be required of you. If you die in your unbelief, you will die in your sins, and His blood shall be required at your hand.
7. So you have no excuse, for though you were not there 2000 years ago on that skull shaped hill, others were there and did it for you, and though you gave no consent verbally, yet you do consent in your heart every day. As long as you hate Christ you give your nod of approval to his death. As long as you reject his sacrifice, and despise his love, you give evidence in your hearts that you would have crucified the Lord of glory had you been there. For you are no different.
8. When you laugh at his people, when you despise his word, and mock at his ordinances, you are driving nails into his hands, and thrusting the spear into his side; therefore those open hands and that pierced side shall be witnesses against *you*, even against *you*, if ye die rejecting him, and enter into eternity enemies of Christ by your wicked works.
9. This then, friends, is the reason why our ascended Lord Jesus Christ still bears the visible wounds of the cross unto the Day of Judgment. It is an unpleasant flipside of the coin in coming to understand the wounds of Christ to be sure, for the sight of Christ with his wounds still open will be a terrible sight for an assembled universe on the day of judgment. Many a mother and father will give their nod of approval with all the host of angels and multitude of saints, that it is right and just for Christ to cast their Christ denying sons and daughters, and grandsons and daughters into hell.

### **III. WHAT DOES CHRIST MEAN TO TELL US BY BEARING THE VISIBLE WOUNDS OF CALVARY?**

#### *A. That Our Sins Have Been Paid for In-Full*

1. Canceling of debt; punctured receipt (**Receipt puncture**)
2. Redemption, kinsman redeemer (to buy back)
4. Justification as in destruction of evidence/expunging of records and files/blotting out from the book of judgment (etch-a-sketch)
5. Legal amnesia; cast behind; sea of forgetfulness (**Black box**)
6. His wounds are permanent reminders to forget who we were, and remember who we are. Colossians 2:13-15 say-

***“Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ’s Cross. He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.”*** Message Bible

***B. That the Barrier to God has Been Removed and We Who Were Once Alienated and Aloof from God Can Now Draw Near to His Throne***

1. James 4:8 – ***“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you”***
2. Ephesians 2:12b-13 –  
***“at one time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”***
3. Veil torn in two from top to bottom = *access*
4. His wounds serve as personal reservations that save a place for us before the throne of grace.

***C. That We Have An Advocate Who is Seated At the Right Hand of God the Father, Who Ever Lives to Intercede on Our Behalf***

1. 1 John 2:2 ***“...if anyone [Christian] commits sin, we have an advocate [one who speaks to the Father in our defense] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...”***
2. Hebrews 7:24  
***“because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. <sup>25</sup>Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”***
3. Lawyer language: a go between, counselor, defense attorney whose wounds announce He is ever on retainer to act on our behalf, and

that serve as evidence that there is no record of our having ever sinned.

*D. That His Wounds are a Personal Invitation For Each of Us to Receive Cleansing and Healing For Our own Wounds and Scars*

1. **There are three things that mark the impact of sin in our lives** (When we speak of sin we are not talking about little naughty naughties; mistakes; boo boos; etc, but we are talking about those things that separate us from fruitfulness in life and fulfilling relationship with God the Father).
2. In most people's minds, a Sunday School-ish, juvenile, even infantile attitude about sin prevails in most people's minds, that accompany a kind of bashful, cringing, ashamed bowing of the head and shuffling of the feet and the confession, "I did a bad thing."
3. No, every time we choose to sin we sever ourselves from the source and fountain of fulfillment and life ("All your fountains are in me")
4. **Sin impacts us in these ways:**
  - a. **Sin stains:**
    1. The Bible says that God see's the stain of sin on us, **wash**  
**"...the stain of your guilt is still before me," declares the Sovereign LORD."**
    2. A Hebrew woman used to take a white cloth and dip it into a dye to make a crimson or deep red garment. After leaving the garment to dry in the sun, they would again dip the already stained garment into the crimson dye to make the very fiber of the garment stained permanently. In Isaiah 1:16 it is recorded, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The literal translation of this verse can be read; "though your sin be double dyed, and permanently stained, I will wash you white as snow."
    3. What a beautiful illustration of the cleansing power of Jesus Christ in our life. His wounds cleanse the sin that stains you.
  - b. Sin **shames** and causes us to always attempt to hide our self-perceived scars and stains, attempting to avoid detection, inspection, rejection.
  - c. And Sin **scars** in that it marks our lives like a calendar; there is a fundamental fact of it's occurrence. Sin is a fact, a personal and historical fact in a person's life. The stain or scar is the mark of our failure. Because our sin is a fact, it leaves a mark upon our recollections; it mars our historical

timeline. That mark leaves an indelible stain or scar in our conscience **and a memory of the fact of the failure** (not to everybody but to those who have a sensitive soul, and tender conscience).

1. (Prodigal son's robe covered every stain on his clothes and in his skin)
2. Long sleeves to cover the scars of suicide due to shame of the past.
3. The **"little black box"** on airplanes
4. Past stains do not have to incessantly dominate your life. Let Christ's own robes of righteousness clothe and cover your own stains that mark your sinful past.
5. Colossians 2:14-15 speaks of the scars of Christ as proof of our cancelled debt and expunged record,

***"having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross; (ASV)***

***"He canceled the debt, which listed all the rules we failed to follow. He took away that record with its rules and nailed it to the cross. (NCV)***

***"He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. (NLT)***

***"erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. (NRSV)***

6. The various translations regarding our certificate of sin debt in verse 14, speak of it as an -
  - "old arrest warrant"
  - "bond written in ordinances that was against us"
  - the "list of all the rules we failed to follow"
  - "the record that contained the charges against us"
  - "the charges that had been proved against you, the list of commandments which you had not obeyed"
  - "the record that stood against us with its legal demands"
7. The document spoken of here was literally ***something written by one's own hand or signed by one's own hand.***

8. **Legal documents were handwritten by the judge as well as lawyers.** Judges would handwrite both the verdict and the sentence to be paid out. Such statements would then have to be signed by the defendant
9. This could also refer to a handwritten certificate of debt by which a debtor acknowledged their indebtedness.
10. Such a legal document served as a binding contract, in which the debtor binds himself/herself to hard labor, or make any payments on the debt, which remains in full force until the last penny is paid and the bond cancelled.
11. Note the **“against-ness”** attributed to this bill or bond of debt, which meant that it served as an **indictment drawn up as a witness against us, the accused**; in this context, it could also be seen as an **arrest warrant**, complete with a list of charges of the crimes we have committed, and worse yet, against our lawyers advice, we have admitted to; and in that light, it could be a signed confession of guilt, proving our guilt, demanding sentence to be passed, and thus as a hostile witness, stands opposed to us, blocking any chance of our forward progress or moving on, or being at peace, until we Paid The Debt In Full!
12. When we place the devil into this script, we can see how easy his case against us is going to be: he’s got the evidence plus the signed confession!
13. **HOWEVAH!** This passage in Colossians 2 tells us that something has been done to this certificate of indebtedness, this arrest warrant, this signed confession of guilt, that has not only neutralized it’s power to condemn us, it has nullified it altogether!! To hammer home this truth of what Jesus accomplished on His cross, and how Christ’s wounds serve as the receipt of our release from sin’s debt, Paul employs three verbs: **Blotted, cancelled or wiped clean, removal (as in “took it away”)** and **nailing, or piercing.**
14. The Greek word for **cancelled- Exaleipho**, literally means to blot out, wipe off, cross off, mark through, cancel, and erase, to wash, cleanse, destroy, make void, rub out, as in eliminating something altogether; to obliterate it.
15. **ILLUSTRATION: The Titulus** - Paul may have the titulus, the tablet fixed over Jesus’ head on which his

- crimes were written, in mind here, and that it was our sins, not his, which were inscribed. A titulus served much like a bill of debt as well as criminal charges.
16. The purpose of the Titulus was to publicly humiliate a condemned criminal and let as many people know as was possible what the crucified person was being executed for. His crime and his humiliation were made an open show for all to see.
  17. The crimes on Jesus titulus was simply a title – Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, which literally described the two crimes he allegedly committed for which he was crucified: blasphemy (what the Jews charged him with, for “the King of the Jews” was a messianic title reserved for the Messiah alone, and it was considered blasphemy to claim that title for yourself; it was blasphemy that the Jews charged Jesus with, that warranted his execution); and the title was also considered **treasonous** against Caesar, which was punishable by death according to Roman law).
  18. So Jesus’ titulus, by being nailed to the cross, represented him dying for the sins of both Jews and non-Jews – hence – the sins of the world. It represented a certificate of indebtedness, a handwritten confession of guilt, etc, which was pierced by a nail.
  19. Now when Colossians says “ he took it away” it literally means to ***pick or lift something up and take it or carry it away in the sense of getting rid of it, or removing it -***
  20. The perfect tense in the Greek of this verb emphasizes the permanence of the removal of this Certificate of indebtedness, which has been so totally and completely paid in full, that it is completely cancelled to the point that it can never be used against us again.
    - Now here’s the point (no pun intended): the phrase “nailing it to the cross” alluded to the ancient method by which a bond or certificate of indebtedness or some other legal document was cancelled, by piercing it with a nail or some other pointed device like the one I just talked about, and affixing it to a post for public inspection.
  21. Do you remember the last 3 words of Jesus: ***“It is finished”***. The Greek word is ***tetelestai***.

- This same word has been found in ancient papyri being written across receipts for taxes, and meant that they had been **PAID IN FULL!**
  - Here in John 19:30, tetelestai is in the perfect tense, causing it to mean - It has been and will forever remain finished !!
22. All these words speak to the total obliteration of the arrest warrants, signed confessions, certificate of indebtedness, and any other written or otherwise recorded indebtedness you have incurred because of sin. What this means is that if guilt is based on fact (and it is), then there is no basis for a Christian to suffer from the torment of a guilt-ridden conscience, or from a fear of future judgment, because the fact of our guilt has been dealt with, paid for, and thus obliterated – records and all!
23. God not only forgives sin but absorbs and cancels it in the cross of Christ: the Lord Jesus in His death was absorbing the agony of shame and stain that goes along with sin, and took it all into himself. Scripture says in the **147<sup>th</sup> Psalm** (verse 2) that the Lord heals the wounds of the past. ***“He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.”***
24. There is a specific healing or a completion of wholeness in us that is directly related to the wounds Jesus bore for us. Remember what Jesus said when instituting the last supper? ***“This is my body, broken for you.”*** Remember what the preposition ***“for”*** means when speaking of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ? It means ***“on behalf of for the benefit of.”*** His brokenness was for our brokenness and the stains or scars of sin (scars are physical marks that memorialize the area of past injury, and we bear them on our body and, in emotional ways, in our souls).
25. Jesus wounds heal the brokenness in our lives that were caused by sin: sins we committed against God and others, or sins committed against us by others) and also, Jesus wounds cleanse us of the stain and shame of sin left indelibly upon our conscience and memories so that we can step off the escalator that continuously recycles our past, and begin walking in the newness of life.
26. It is time we begin to recognize Jesus Christ in our midst, who appears amongst us despite our locked doors of fear and doubt and grief and pain. Who

comes with his sleeves and hem rolled up to reveal the source from which all blessings flow: his wounds. His wounds. His wounds. See them, behold them, handle them, stick your whole hand in the wounds, but be no longer doubting but believe and receive healing for your wounds, cleansing from your stains, and a testimony of victory for your scars.

27. Jesus appeared to Thomas and addressed his justification for doubting the possibility of and hope of healing and cleansing of his physical and emotional scars, and said, “Here ya go, Thomas. Look at the holes in my hands, Put your finger into them. And my feet – see the holes – feel them, put your fingers into them; and my side, Thomas, put your whole hand inside it. And be not faithless, but believe – let hope arise, and stop doubting the promise of healing and cleansing of the physical and emotional wounds you carry because of the consequence of sins. What more can I do but be broken for your brokenness and poured out for your cleansing.”

28. When Jesus prayed in his agony in the garden, he bled out of every pore in his body. The point is that there is not one place on your anatomy, not one place where pollution and moral corruption has stained and scarred you that Jesus did not bleed in his own body and was broken in body and soul for you.

29. Tu vulnera Jesu! Thy wounds, Jesus!

**30.** Take Mel Gibson’s cue: He told Christianity Today: **“I went to the wounds of Christ in order to cure my wounds.”**

*E. And lastly, Christ Bears His Scars Triumphantly Because They Speak of Victory, Obedience, Nobility, and Love, giving Courage and Purpose and Honor to Those Who Bear Visible Scars of Their Own*

1. In order for our wounds to heal, physically and emotionally, we need to open up to the power of Christ. The Roman soldiers couldn’t be healed, because they were wearing armor; the disciples couldn’t be healed because their doors were shut out of fear, grief and doubt...If we are going to be healed, we need to expose our wounds to the touch of Christ. We need to make contact with the healing power of Christ’s wounds, for there is medicine in them there scars!
2. But there are scars that Jesus won’t remove. External scars that tell a story of what once was, and what now is. A story of redemption. Our redemption. Our scars speak of what we once were, and what we have now become. Just as Christ’s scars tell their own story, ours

are meant to tell our story. His are meant to tell His story throughout all eternity, that what he did will never be forgotten. But our story can only be told down here, because one day, when we go home to God, all our tears and pain will be wiped away, and unlike Jesus, we won't have any telltale scars left on our new resurrected bodies. No, if we are going to show our scars, and let them testify of what Jesus has done for us, it will have to be done here, while we live out our mortal lives.

3. Ironically, many people live out their days spending lots of emotional energies and financial resources to hide if not erase their scars altogether. They are ashamed of their scars, humiliated by them. They see scars as disfiguring. Nothing good comes from scars they think. But that depends on the kind of scar it is, you see. If a scar is made up of proud flesh, then it is not a very good thing at all.
4. That is because it formed too quickly before the wound was cleansed and healed. As a result, it only appears to be a healed wound, when actually, underneath the scar is a reservoir filled with corruption and infection and death. The scar needs to be opened to drain out the infection and then heal from the inside out, to be truly healed. For emotional proud flesh, the scar has to be reopened by hearing and receiving the sharp edged sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. It will hurt (we call this conviction); it will need to be cleansed first by godly sorrow and confession of personal sin where once you blamed others, or of putting the blame on others where once you wrongly assumed the blame for what they had done. The second stage of cleansing is when you embrace the cleansing blood of Jesus that releases you from the sin that crouched behind the wound, whether your own or someone else's, by receiving forgiveness or granting forgiveness, or both (forgiving others as well as yourself). This will cause what once was a source of shame for you to become a symbol of victory and redemption and healing.
5. I had a beautiful young woman attend our church years ago, who always wore high necked collars. Her reason was that she was ashamed of the green scar that went around the base of her neck. It was caused by a chain that had been there years before. Her boyfriend and her were out on a date. As he was reaching to help her out of the car, lightning struck and killed him. The current went through him and into her, causing the metal necklace she was wearing to burn a permanent scar into her neck. The scar reminded her of the traumatic event which left bigger scars on her soul.
6. I had a friend who moved into our trailer park in Vacaville, California, who was horribly scarred all over his body from an Army accident in Vietnam. An explosives shed caught fire, and when it exploded, he was only a few yards away. He was scarred and charred all over his face, neck, shoulders, torso and arms. His fingers were melted into a fist, and he only had a few fingers on each hand. But his wife loved him anyway, and didn't mind those

scars one bit. And because of her attitude toward those scars, he didn't mind them either. The only person who mattered to him accepted those scars, were proud of those scars, honored those scars, kissed those scars. So he could care less what other people thought about him or them. He learned there was a lot of dividends and benefits he could collect on because of those scars. I was with him when he did some collecting one day. He loved fast cars, and he took me for a ride in his loud and fast 71 Camero one summer evening, and sure enough , he got caught. In fact, he tried to get pulled over by the CHP. Well he did. And as the officer slowly walked up, flipping his little black book open as he did, my friend, who always wore short sleeves shirts so all his scars would show, leaned his arm out the window and rested it on the side of the car. As the officer walked up to the car, he saw my friends mangled arm and hand. As he did, my friend, in his most humble voice, said, "Gee, I-I'm sorry, officer. You see I just got back from "nam" and I was so happy to be home and all, after being so long recovering from my wounds from the war, that I just wanted to feel the free air as I put the pedal to the medal. I promise, sir, it won't happen again." And the cop's expression changed to one of honor and compassion. Folding up his book, he gave my friend a warning to muffle his pipes and drive safer, then patted him on the arm and thanked him for what he did for his country. "Works every time" he said, as he drove off.

7. My Grandpa Pete would always show me his "war wound" as he called it. He would unbuckle his belt and pull his pants partially down on his right side to show me a crater-like scar, indented, almost like a hole just in back of his hip near his right cheek. It was caused by shrapnel during WWII. He was proud of that scar, but I was prouder. It caused him pain at times, and made him walk a little crooked at times, but he wore it like a medal. From time to time I made him show it to my friends and me. It was a source of pride for me, because of the story they told about my grandpa's commitment to our country. He knew up close and personal what the price of freedom was, because he felt it every time he walked.
8. That is what Jesus does to scars; He reconciles all scars in his own. He takes away the trauma and pain, and regret, and replaces them with an acknowledgment of sin, and acceptance of forgiveness, and a joy found being put right with God.
9. When this happens to an individual, he/she becomes a new creature in Christ – old things are passed away, and all things have become new and are of God. As a result, scars from our past now serve as the outline for our testimony, just as His do.
10. The most eloquent mouths that ever spoke are the wounds of Christ! Listen! Listen! Every drop of blood says, "Peace!" Every wound says, "Pardon! Life, eternal life!" And every scar we

bear can become the source of our greatest eloquence because of Jesus, if we allow their tongues to be loosed.

11. Years ago (1983) Charles Rothenberg, a New York waiter, took his then 5 year old son David to a hotel room next to Disneyland and, in an act of retribution toward the boys mother, poured kerosene on the sleeping boy and set him on fire, because he was irate with the boys mother for divorcing him. He served seven years of a 13-year prison term. The case was widely publicized in the media.
12. When it was all said and done, David had lost 90 percent of his skin. He was seeing a psychologist to help him with his adjusting to life while being horribly disfigured.
13. He was described by evangelist Dave Roever, another man covered in scars from being burned, as follows: ***“He had no nose, no ears, no lips, no eyelids, no fingers, no toes, but a heart big enough to make up for all the missing parts.”***
14. Dave was badly injured when a phosphorous grenade w blew up in his hand. He had 60 lbs of flesh blown off his body, and 40% of his skin burned off. He had lost his nose, ear, lips, and fingers. At first he begged God to take his life, then for God to take his scars. He just couldn't reconcile himself to his disfigurement. He even suggested that it wasn't fair of God to not heal him and that God didn't know what it was like to be so scarred. However, Dave Roever came to terms with his disfiguring scars during a Good Friday service after being back in the states for a while. The Pastor had rigged up a faucet on stage as the center piece, and had it drip slowly, drop by drop as he shared on the wounds of Christ. Afterward, after everyone left, Dave's brother-in-law testified that Dave stood there for hours staring at that faucet and watching every drop, as he contemplated the sufferings Jesus went through, and the scarring that occurred – for Him. When He got up from his knees he was different, and was never the same again. At last he was reconciled to his scars, because he took them to the wounds of Christ and was healed from the inside out.
15. Little David was just beginning his long journey of hearing people say, "Ugh, look at that monster." "Oh, mommy. Look, a freak." But his mother allowed him to travel with Dave Roever around the world, listening to him give his testimony of Jesus healing scars, at times to hundreds, and at times to as many as 80,000 people at Billy Graham crusades, and soon little David Rothenberg began to heal from the scars on the inside of his heart, which turned the scars on the outside into medals. Listen to what Roever says about scars.
16. Emotional scars run deep. But what is a scar? It's evidence. Evidence that first you got hurt, and second you got healed. A scar is the evidence of healing. If you just got hurt and had no scar, you would bleed to death. Thank God for scars. They tell the would that you're OK now.

17. I believe the ministry God has given me today to literally millions of high school students could never have succeeded without scars. they are my evidence, my validity. A man with no scar has not traveled far.
18. The identity with Christ that we all can share is through His scars. We want to know Christ in the power of His resurrection, but our greatest understanding comes through the fellowship of His sufferings. Someone once said that ministry is born out of misery.
19. For a little girl whose scars are on the inside and a little boy whose scars are on the outside, two examples of healing are found. And to the best of my knowledge in searching the Scriptures, the only scars in heaven will not be found on the face of big David or little David, but rather on the body of Jesus Christ.
20. In Revelation 5:6, John turned and saw a lamb as if it were slain.
21. The Greek tense literally reads, "***as if it were freshly slain.***"
22. His wounds are still fresh and by his wounds we are healed.
23. More Christians are sickly and not experiencing victory in their lives because they are so busy going from one stimulus to another, from one activity to another, so much input, so much noise, that they struggle to remember what Christ has done for them. We quickly forget. Remember his wounds people, and be not doubting, but believe the truth that is in those scars. By His wounds you are healed. By His wounds you are healed. By His wounds, you are healed. The truth of that will make you free.
24. Hebrews 2:1 reminds us to "***... give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest they/we drift away (slip).***"
25. The Greek word for ***truth*** literally means "***un-forgetting.***" After seeing ***The Passion of the Christ***, one person prayed a simple prayer, "***I'm sorry. I forgot.***" ***Don't forget! Keep yourself ever in the truth. Be unforgetting.***
26. That's why the wounds are there for all eternity, to always remind us that the price for our healing and salvation and peace, has been paid for in full. Christ is our eternal receipt. That, and not good music, hot musicians, great singers and strobe lights, is the impetus of Christian and angelic worship. Remembering by meditating on the wounds and scars of Christ.

Some years ago on a hot summer day in south Florida a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house.

In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks, and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore. His mother--in the house was looking out the window--saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her

son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother.

It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the mother grabbed her little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs. That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go.

A farmer happened to drive by, heard her screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator. Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived.

His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal. And, on his arms, were deep scratches where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma, asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then, with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my mom wouldn't let go."

You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. No, not from an alligator, or anything quite so dramatic. But, the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But, some wounds, my friend, **are because God has refused to let go.** In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you with **a love that would not let you go.**

He has the scars to prove it. Remember!

Won't you bring your scarred and stained and shamed soul to Jesus this morning, and let his wounds heal your wounds? Isn't it time you stop resisting the Holy Spirit and surrender to the love of God that will not let you go?