



Key Notes

*A*nd he showed them his hands and side.... (John 20:20).

Jesus was alive again! His body was that of a new order, glorified in all its perfections. And yet the scars remained. The gouging disfigurement of the nails and the jagged tear from the spear were still visible in that radiant body of our glorified Lord. But why? Most of us want to cover up a scar and hide it from others. It embarrasses us. It's ugly. And yet the Scriptures state that the first thing Jesus did when he met with his disciples on that first Easter Sunday was to show them his scars.

For 2,000 years Christians have loved those scars. We sing about them. We meditate upon them. Far from being ugly, those scars are the most beautiful part of his body! More eloquently than words can express, those wounds convey the heart of the Gospel:

They tell us how much God loves us. *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us* (1 John 3:16). Whenever you are tempted to doubt God's love for you, just look again at those scars! Nothing speaks with more eloquent forcefulness of the vast and inexhaustible riches of grace... than those wounds!

They remind us of Jesus' present ministry of intercession. Ascended to the right hand of God, today Jesus is interceding for you (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). Your name is engraved on the palm of his hand (Isa. 49:16). Those wounds plead to the Father on your behalf. Charles Wesley expressed it so well when he wrote:

Five bleeding wounds he bears, received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

They give sober testimony to the cost of discipleship. *If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first* (John 15:18). It was in the act of showing his nail-pierced hands that Jesus sent his followers into the world. *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you* (John 20:21). To follow Christ is to walk the way of the cross. As Amy Carmichael put it: *Can he have followed far who hast no wound or scar?*

They give us hope that our scars too can be transformed! We all have wounds of one form or another. We've been hurt. The Gospel declares there is no wound so deep that the grace of God cannot heal it. Though the scar may remain, God can transform what was once an ugly symbol of shame into a badge of glory!

If your God has no scar, then you are worshiping the wrong god!

Pastor Stan