

Wounded - A Communion Message

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[0 : 00] Wounded, the wounds of Christ. Consider with me this solemn subject of the wounds of Christ! that he bore in the context of his crucifixion. And I warn you that some of this content will be quite graphic. You can imagine walking down a hospital corridor and entering the emergency department and seeing some of the injuries that you would see there. We're going to talk about wounds today.

It tells of our Lord, Isaiah 53 verse 5. But 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. Consider with me the profound and immense suffering of our Lord. As he underwent the cross and all that preceded it. That he underwent that willingly for our salvation.

And we'll discuss some of the various types of extensive wounds. Using some medical terminology. To help us appreciate the extent of his sacrifice. I'm sure some of the nurses present could relate. To appreciate the extent of his crucifixion. Our Lord suffered multiple wounds. Really the main six wounds you could speak of. Of wounds that people suffer.

[1 : 32] And these were all suffered during his crucifixion or in the context of it. So the first one we see is the contused wound. A contusion it's called. Which is a wound produced by a blunt object.

A bruise caused by a blunt trauma. And such a wound comes from being struck with a rod. As was foretold of our Lord. In Micah 5 verse 1. It tells they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

So contused wounds is the technical term. They were inflicted upon our Lord. As he was mercilessly beaten and scourged before his crucifixion. As we read Isaiah 53 verse 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

Now I could have illustrated some of these wounds with graphic pictures. But I thought best not to make it even more graphic than needs to be. But we think of the bruising of our Lord. He was bruised it says. He was bruised it says. For our iniquities. For our sin.

And bruised here. It signifies the deep contusions. And the internal damage. That was caused by the cruel scourging. Emphasising the physical trauma our Lord endured. So the first one there. The contused wound. So a bruising.

[2 : 55] And then we see secondly. There was a lacerated wound. A laceration. Which is the wound that's produced by a tearing instrument. So a tear in the skin. Or other tissue. So Christ would have received such a wound from the scourging.

The Roman scourge was a many-tailed lash. Had as they call it a nine tails. A cat of nine tails. It had many separate lashes on the one lash.

So each thong of the lash. Of the various tails of the lash. Had metal or ivory pieces. So that in the hands of a cruel expert. The sufferer might truthfully say. As it says in Psalm 129 verse 3.

The plowers ploughed upon my back. They made long their furrows. So his back was like a field that had been churned up. And the prophet cried 750 years earlier. Before the crucifixion. I gave my back to the smiters.

That's Isaiah 50 verse 6. And as we read John 19.1. It says then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. Now if Jesus received 39 stripes in Pilate's judgment hall. When you think 39 times 9. He would have had inflicted on his back a total of 351 lashes.

[4 : 16] 351 lashes on his lacerated back. So just think of the picture of it. The depth and the intensity that that meant. Of our precious Lord.

If he received more than 39 stripes. Which is possible from the Romans. The lashes would have been even more than those 351. And Eusebius records how many bled to death from scourging alone. Before being crucified.

In many cases not only was the back of the person scourged. Cut open in all directions. But even the eyes were torn out. The face and breasts were torn open. And teeth knocked out. Now bear with me. I know this is quite confronting. But this is the reality. Sometimes you see the pictures as he's portrayed. With hardly an injury on his skin. But friends this was gruesome. This is graphic. And we should understand the full force of suffering that he went through. And that was for you and for me brothers and sisters. We can be glad that he took our pain for us. The historian Eusebius I quote says.

[5 : 26] All around were horrified to see them torn with the scourges that their very own veins were laid bare. And their inner muscles and sinews and even their very bowels were exposed. This was quite gruesome. The lacerated wound. Our Lord bore that for you. For me. So freely. So lovingly.

Thirdly we see another wound. The abraded wound. So abrasion. We think of abrasion as that which is caused by some object rubbing or scraping against the skin. So it was a scrape or a scratch on the skin.

So it was a scrape or a scratch on the skin. Christ would have suffered this type of wound. When you can think of it as he was forced to carry that rough wooden cross upon his back. As he bore that wood upon his back. That was already torn by the scourging.

And we see in John 19 through 16, 17. It says as Jesus was forced to carry his cross. We can imagine those abrasions and the cuts that would have been caused by the timber upon his already weakened and wounded body.

And his physical condition became so poor that he could not continue to carry the cross. And Simon was compelled to carry it further. A fourth wound is the penetrating wound.

[6 : 38] A penetrating wound is a deep wound caused by a sharp pointed instrument. So we think of our Lord, a wound that goes through the skin and into the underlying tissues, was when they placed upon his head the crown of thorns.

Brothers and sisters, the crown of thorns. Matthew 27, 29, John 19, 2. It tells how the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head and they put on him a purple robe.

Those wounds would have been quite deep. And it says in Matthew 27, 30, that they smote him on the head with the reed or the rod.

So, and when it says that, Matthew 27, verse 30, it's got a sense of repeatedly. They repeatedly struck him. And this thorn that he wore, this thorny crown, is, I'm told, the Jerusalem thorn provided what was a victor's crown.

Really, it was a crown of victory, which really it was the victory of the cross. And this victor's crown, this Jerusalem thorn crown, bore over 100 spikes, four inches long, sharp as a needle, which the soldiers pressed upon his head.

[7 : 52] So you think of that penetrating there, the laceration would have been not superficial, but deep, penetrating the scalp, causing immense pain. Of course, the head contains lots of blood vessels, so it would have been quite a sight.

And when you think of the thorny crown, brothers and sisters, think what it means, what it signifies. Back in Genesis 3, what happened with the fall of man? Cursed is the ground for thy sake, and sorrow thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life.

Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee. So Christ bore the very curse of Genesis 3, of man's sin, of the fallen man, of man's curse.

He bore it as the very curse upon his head. Fifthly, we see the perforating wound. It's one that pierces through the body at some point. A perforating wound is a wound that goes through an organ or other body cavity.

When Christ was crucified, they drove metal spikes through him, brothers and sisters, into his hands and his feet. And this was prophesied in Psalm 22, verse 16. Now, Psalm 22, verse 16 was written way back in history.

[9 : 03] So crucifixion was not practiced as a means of capital punishment for the Jews. So the words that the psalmist penned would have puzzled him. He wouldn't have known what he was saying when he wrote those words that they pierced him, pierced his hands and his feet.

So at that early time, they wouldn't have known of crucifixion. But thereby, God was signifying what death he should die. In Zechariah 13, verse 6, we can also relate where it asks the question, What are these wounds in thine hands?

In Psalm 22, verse 16, as I say, it says, For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. This word pierced, it suggests a combination of penetrating and incised wounds, emphasising the severity of the injuries. Of course, we know back in the New Testament, at his resurrection and then his further appearances, in John 20, verse 25, Thomas says, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails.

He had that sense of doubt. He wanted to see the print, it says, of the nails in his hands. And this term print indicates visible marks left by the nails.

[10:21] So very clearly evident penetration and where they could see damage to the nerves and the blood vessels. So the perforating wound.

And then we see sixthly, the incised wound. Incision. It's a cut produced by a sharp instrument. When we think of it, of our Lord, as he suffered that ordeal of the cross, of course, he had significant blood loss.

At the end his body received an incision wound, when the Roman soldier thrust his spear into our Lord's side to ensure that he was dead. John 19, verse 34 says, One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith came there out blood and water.

So this perforating and penetrating wound, it attests to the physical trauma of our Lord. Just some medical description here.

It punctured his thoracic cavity, resulting in the release of blood and fluid called serous fluid from the pericardial sac. So this sac near the heart, this pericardium, this closed sac encasing the heart, is lubricated by a small amount of fluid, about a teaspoon, to facilitate the motion of the heart.

[11:37] And medical sources say, I quote, The normal amount of the pericardial fluid is about a teaspoonful, but it may increase to 24 teaspoonfuls where the death agony is prolonged.

So there we see as the spear penetrated the sac of the heart there, that it gushed out. So there was evident demonstration that there was a prolonged agony in his death.

And this water is testimony of that, that intense suffering of our Lord. Of course we know our Lord, even hours earlier in the garden, His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood.

So this wound, this incised wound, this incision, was inflicted by the practiced hand of the Roman soldier, to make certain that whatever vestige of life was present would be extinguished.

But while it did not cause death in His case, it is an assurance to all men that death had actually occurred. Of course we know the psalms falsely teach, including one of the major world religions, that the Lord Jesus never died.

[12:48] This is an eyewitness account, that He was well and truly dead. There's no doubt about it. There's no question about it. And it was prophesied, and from the wound, so large that Thomas could have thrust his hand into it, came there out blood and water, the water that flowed from the pericardium and the blood that flowed from the heart.

Of course his wounds were manifold. We could say so much more. And I think clearly it's very evident of our Lord's tremendous actual suffering.

We could think of the wounds that He bore by mutilation. As it reads, His face more marred than any man's. It says, He gave His back to the smiters. He says, I gave my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.

I hid not my face from shame and spitting. So the blood flowed from our Lord's mutilation of His face, friends. And it was for you and for me, as they tore out handfuls of His beard.

He did it for us. And friends, let us have that love to Him, that acknowledgement of Him, that thankfulness this morning. It says, By His stripes. And some reckon, well you could actually put it, by His sore.

[14:02] It was like, by His stripes we are healed. In other words, by His sore we are healed. His hurt. It was as if He was one sore from head to toe. That's the sense of it. His whole body was this mass of suffering from head to toe.

It's like He was one sore, such that He was suffering. More than any man. And He did it for you and for me. Friends, it's something to take very seriously. Take it personally this morning.

I trust that you know Him as your Saviour. And the intense suffering was for a reason. It was purposeful. It was deliberate. He willingly experienced it. The lengths that He went to redeem us. We can't really put it into human terms. Even all these medical terms that I've kind of touched on here. What matters is His wounds show His sacrificial love for us today.

And our Lord bore more especially than the physical suffering. And really all the trauma associated would have been the very fact that our sin was on His body. It tells how He took my sins in His body on the tree.

[15 : 06] That would have been a very weighty thing, would it not? For our very sin to be there. As He was nailed, His person was nailed. So were our sins were nailed to the tree.

And He suffered so we could be forgiven and redeemed. So that we could have eternal life. Friends, what a blessing, what a joy as we reflect on these things. The great price of our redemption today.