

Dancing with the Scars

Easter

Wynne Lankford

Bumper:

Death seemed to have won! The troublemaker had been silenced.

Jesus' disciples *had been scattered* and this movement had been crushed.

The religious leaders were back in unchallenged authority.

They were no longer being challenged by this Nazarene preacher named Jesus.

They proved that he was just a man. He was dead, pack away in a tomb like every other man who got in their way.

If He had been the Son of God as He claimed, then He would not have died....right?

He bled, He died and now **all is back to the way** it should be.

The Pharisees requested a contingency of Roman guards to watch over Jesus' tomb, to make sure that his disciples would not come and tamper with his body.

He was dead. The tomb was sealed. No one could change what had been done.

It was an **IRREVERSIBLE**....finish. **Jesus had lost. Pharisees had won.**

Hope was gone; this is where the disciples and we were all left on Friday, darkness lost hope.

How many of you have ever been there? Where it looks like there is **no HOPE!** Some of you are there right now. It looks like the situation your in is irreversible.

But friends, this is **NOT the message of Easter** Sunday morning!

NO! The unexpected thing happened! The impossible thing happened!

The one thing that no one anticipated..... **A DEAD MAN...JESUS CAME BACK TO LIFE!** God did the impossible.

THAT IS WHAT WE ARE CELEBRATING THIS MORNING!

He brought life out of death! -- **He is RISEN!!!!!!** (HE IS RISEN INDEED!)

Jesus conquered **death, hell and the grave,** rose from the dead and **He has the scars to prove it!**

Think of this, Jesus **willing took on our sin**, allowing Himself to take the beating and faced the brutality of death leaving Him **permanently scared**.

In fact, the **Prophet Isaiah, 700 years before** Jesus came and died, penned these words to illustrate the power of work Jesus did on the cross!

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus was purposely **pierced**, **crushed**, and **wounded** for all of us --- **His scars are a reminder of the HIGH price He paid for us!**

It was the **transgressions** of the whole world that **pierced Him!**

I was **OUR iniquities** of that **crushed Him!**

And yet by those **wounds....**by **His sacrifice....** we are healed!
Made whole!

What an amazing truth! Jesus was and is raised from the dead!
HE IS ALIVE!

The Gospel of John chapter 20, gives us the eyewitness account of how all of this happened.

Early on the first day of the week, Sunday morning women came to the tomb to care for Jesus' body. When they arrived they found the tomb open.

Angels appeared to them announced Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the women went to report to the other disciples.

While they were on their way Jesus reveals himself to them.

Jesus has a **conversation with Mary Magdalene**, who went immediately to the disciples with the good news: "**I have seen the Lord – He is Alive!**"

And that evening Jesus appeared to the disciples:

John 20:19-20 (NIV) ¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

I find it amazing that one of the first things Jesus does is, **show the disciples His scars.**

I believe Jesus knew what we all know, **scars tell stories**, and **what better way to prove to the disciples that it was Him**, then by showing the scars from His crucifixion.

But you know, **I think there is a deeper reason**, I think Jesus wanted them to know that **He wants to meet us** at our **point of woundedness**.

All of us have scars, these scars have come from the wounds of life.

We see the evidence in our lives from the scars created by sin and the consequences of sin.

We are all impacted by the scars that come into our life because of this reality we all face.

Each of us from the moment we are born, see the effects from the wounds created by sin.

You put children in the same room, for any amount of time and you will **see the nature and our condition of sin** begin to be displayed.

They play together fine for a while, then social orders are established, then the ONE TOY that every child wants becomes identified.

Before you know it you have disputes, spats turn to assaults and someone gets pushed to the side, wounded and at times these wounds can leave scars.

As we grow older we are faced with the reality that scars not only come from our nature they can come from other areas as well.

In fact, **life can create scars.**

I will never forget the first time I experienced evil in this world.

I was a **small child** and my **dad was watching the news** and a **report came on the television** about some hostages that had been taken in the Olympics in 1972.

Think about this I was **five years old**, minding my own business and this news report came on the air;

http://realclearhistory.com/video/2011/09/05/jim_mckay_the_yre_all_gone.html

Here I was at five years old, **realizing that we live in a world that is NOT safe**, this left a mark in my heart.

It left a fear in my soul, that impacted me deeply in my developmental years.

I began to wonder; **why does God allow bad things to happen to innocent people.**

I carried this scar for years until I began to understand that evil came from the choice made by mankind when given the free will to choose between ***good and evil***.

This choice is known as the **GREAT FALL** of man.

And this action that has left all mankind scared with the **knowledge of good and evil** and all have the freedom of choice to live out of this evil that **can impact many innocent** victims!

Which leads us to the reality that **Others can create scars:**

I'll never forget some of the early wounds that scared me in life.

Up until the third grade I had a **body-type like almost every other kid** in school.

But something happened in the third grade, I grew, but not like I wanted. **I grew OUT and not UP!** How devastating for a kid!

I remember a specific Thanksgiving refusing to eat because some of the kids called me fat at school.

You know the phrase, ***sticks and stones my break my bones but words will never hurt me!*** That is the biggest lie in the world!

Words can cut deep, and for me the words "your fat" rang in my ears, wounded my heart, scared me deeply.

It played out in every area of my life, **kickball** on the playground when they were picking teams guess who was last kid to get picked?

You guessed it me, I can still hear the words, “don’t pick the fat kid.”

PE class when you walked into the gym there were these paper bell posters on the wall, with the names of every third grader who could climb the rope and ring the bell. ***It was the bell ringers club!***

My name wasn’t on the wall, because I couldn’t climb the rope, I can still hear the **laughter of the other kids** in the class and the **voice of my PE teacher shouting** come on Lankford you can do it!

Eventually I grew up, to fill in my growing out, this was helpful for football where I excelled, I was **picked to be on first** string my sophomore year, **all conference** my junior and senior year, **awarded a scholarship** to play in college.

Never the less, the scar was there, and this lead me to make some dumb choices as Coping mechanisms, choosing destructive behavior to deal with the scar!

I became the **class clown**, the **life of the party**, worked to **overcompensate by seeking approval** and **masking my pain with rebellion and substances.**

It was during these years I learned that: We can even **create scars for ourselves.**

I masked my pain with through, **substances, extreme pursuits of pleasure, becoming the gregarious person** in the crowd, one who could be **liked for his humor and being the life of the party.**

Because of my size **I learned that I could power up and bully people into submission** and I became a person who, with a **flex of a muscle, could shift the atmosphere in the room.**

These scars impacted my choices, **I willingly chose to wound myself** with a lifestyle of **substance abuse, promiscuity, and outward acts of defiance** to soothe my soul.

What I didn't realize, **until it was about too late** is that, I was **deepening my own wounds**, driving the knife **deeper into my own soul**, creating more **wounds and scars** to deal with!

I don't think I am the only one here today who has experienced this kind of **self-induced wounds**, I know for many, in this room or online you have experienced this too.

You have **situations in life that have scared you, you have wounds and scars from others or maybe you have even created for yourself** wounds and scars.

All that propel you to the place of asking, **“how do I cope?”**
“how can I find healing?”

You have made choices out of your need to cope, that deepens the wounds and **you find yourself dealing with all of these scars, wondering?**

Is there anyone who can rescue me from this mess!

This is the Good news of Easter; Jesus is ALIVE and appeared to His disciples to **show them HIS scars**. Like us **the disciples** where impacted by the week’s events.

Triumphful entry, **shifting loyalty of the crowd**, all out press by religious leaders to go after Jesus, confusion, crazy arrest, scatter in fear, watching Jesus be killed, their world had been shattered.

- They thought they were following a person who was going to restore Israel and set up a new kingdom
- They thought they were going to have front row seats to this new era of Israel’s new status among the nations.
- They were all impacted by their own failure to stand with Jesus, they all betrayed him and scattered and now they are hiding in a room scared about what might happen to them

And then Jesus after dying brutally shows up ALIVE and the first thing He says is, **"Peace be with you"** and he shows them His Scars!

One of the disciples wasn't there when this happened, **his name was Thomas**, and when he came back to the room the disciples were sharing their wonderful **encounter with the ALIVE JESUS.**

Thomas didn't believe them:

John 20:25 (NIV) ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

One week later Thomas got his wish

John 20:26-28 (NIV) ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus was willing to show up again and specifically for Thomas say again, **"peace be with you** --- go ahead, put your finger here, touch my scars.

Dance with me Thomas I want to meet you at your point of woundedness and let my scars heal your scars."

I think history has been too hard on this guy, this event is now referred to as Doubting Thomas.

It could just as easily have been **Doubting Wynne, or Doubting Tracy or Doubting Janet** because all of us have scars that lead to our doubting in God.

This is why Jesus came, this is why he died. **This is why He showed up after His resurrection** and said here look at my scars.

He is asking all of us will you come **and join me in a new life dance.**

I will help you make sense of what **life has done to you**, heal you from what **others have done to you** and even take care of what **you have done to yourself.**

Jesus is here asking; will you allow me to save you, redeem you and Dance with your scars!

If fact look at what Jesus said to His disciples: **John 20:29 (NIV)**
²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus knew this moment for the disciples was profound and helpful because it gave living proof for everyone that He was indeed risen.

They have what we didn't have, **the choice to see physical evidence** of the resurrection.

Jesus revealed Himself to hundreds of people **to validate the historical fact** that He was ALIVE! And the disciples have one on us in that they got to see Him.

But let me remind you **we have one up on them, we have now, what they didn't have at the time,** we have the Holy Spirit Speaking to us right now, **validating that all that is being spoken here this weekend is true.**

Jesus was in fact ***Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) ⁵ pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.***

The question is, will you join Him in the dance.

Will you allow Him to dance with your scars, Guide you into Peace!

Because He died and Rose from the Grave to say to all of us,
Peace be with you!

Will you allow Him to begin the healing process today!

Let's pray

Response card