

Title: “Wounded”

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John 19:28-35

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Service Readings: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 19:28-35

Exegetical: In this narrative, John records the death of Jesus and the activities that immediately follows. Jesus, after stating that he thirsts, he gives up his spirit. The soldiers break the legs of the other two that were crucified with Jesus but, finding him already dead, pierced his side where blood and water immediately flowed.

Focus: The wounded heart of Jesus heals our wounded heart.

Function: That my hearers may find healing for their deep wounds in the Lord’s Supper and reminders of their baptism.

Malady: Some of our wounds are deep.

Means: (Christus Victor) From the wounded heart of Jesus flowed living blood and water that heals our own heart.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

Christ’s blood and water...

From out of his side poured blood and water. This is what John recorded and there are countless books and videos that explore every angle of these few verses. Do you want to understand the science behind this event? There are articles in the Journal of the American Medical Association on the topic, books and even movies. If you are interested in the historicity of the event, there are mountains of publications that will keep you busy for years on end. If you would rather focus on the theological interpretation, there is no lack of resources available there, either. Anything you want to know about this event can be found in one form or another. But all of that knowledge about the subject, all of the countless hours you could spend researching all of these different avenues, different views of Jesus’ pierced heart means very little when you have a wounded heart, yourself. If you are feeling helpless or feeling hopeless, if your heart is just aching, so broken, you really don’t care about the science. You really don’t care about the history, of why the Roman soldier pierced him. You want to understand the theological reason, you want to understand what God has to say about it, but even that can wait for just a moment. Right now, you have a hurt. You have a hurt so painful, so deep and you want to understand how this passage relates to you. You want to

understand how Jesus offers his blood and water as the medicine that provides healing for you, today. I'd like to describe this using three different stories.

... is the answer to helplessness

She will never forget the date that her church temporarily closed its doors. She heard the news through her friends because she does not have any social media accounts and very rarely accesses the internet. The nation was grappling with the effects of a pandemic and unsure exactly what to do. But one recommendation was very clear - isolate from others. Her church deliberated, consulted with experts, and decided, on March 14th to suspend in-person worship services, but only for two weeks. The impermanence of the decision was the only positive part of the news. Two weeks. She could handle that. How she loved her church! But she understood their reasons and looked forward to her return. Maybe this would make the Easter service even that much more special, she thought. Well, two weeks turned into 4 weeks, into 2 months, and finally news broke that the church would resume services in June - but with new processes in place to protect its members. How she wished she could return with the others, but she was elderly and just couldn't accept that risk. The virus was still spreading unchecked across the nation and proving to be extremely serious to her age group. And so, she stayed home. Spring passed. Summer passed. And now, here it is. One year and three days later. Although the news is slowly becoming brighter by the day, she has no idea when she will be able to worship in person with everyone else. She is still at home and does not attend service. She is still grieving. So wounded is her heart. So heavy is her sorrow. She feels helpless to the world around her and looks to Jesus for answers. Daily she spends time in God's Word and weekly she receives the Lord's Supper. And it is in these activities that Jesus brings her to the cross. And it is there at the cross where the blood pours from his body as the solution to her helplessness and as the comfort to her soul. Not just comfort for this pandemic but comfort for the forgiveness her sins. She knows that when we were still helpless, full of sin, Christ died for us. *Christ died for her*. His blood covers her sins and his blood brings her peace. That water, the source of her baptism, reminds her that she was buried with Christ, that she is now dead to sin, and has been raised with him. She has the hope of everlasting life. And this sustains her, heals her in her time of need. Christ's blood, Christ's water brings her peace.

... is the answer to hopelessness

His television is on every moment that he is awake. His remote is the first thing he reaches for in the morning and the last thing he uses at night. And all throughout the day that remote might get used but only to move from one news station to the next. He watches them all, mixing it all together in hopes of finding the truth. Sure, he has his opinions about the election, opinions about which news channel is more honest and unbiased, but none of that really matters right now. The country is aflame and what used to feel important before, like political parties and elections, now seem almost childish. The country is on fire and there is no time for this immature bickering. But yet everything he sees on TV - every politician, every citizen, every news reporter - all seem to be blind to this reality. They all seem to be focused on just one thing. They all seem to be intent on extinguishing that one tiny flame burning from that one tiny branch when the entire forest around them is on fire. With each passing day he feels more and more hopeless. This nation, this world, is simply being destroyed and there seems to be no hope left for its survival. His heart is heavy. His

wounds are deep. He searches the Bible daily, looking for hope. It is through God's Word that he makes his way to the foot of the cross for something - anything. Just a small glimmer of hope is all he is asking Jesus for. But what he finds is so much bigger than that, so much.... *more*. Christ's blood pours out upon the ground and the earth soaks it in. His blood brings hope, hope that was lost in the garden when Adam and Eve sinned. His blood was shed to restore creation after that sin. His blood was shed to bring hope to the world; to bring hope to this man. Yes, the world *is* on fire, but God is in control - fully and completely. And the water from Jesus soaks the ground, as well. And it follows that hope with restoration. We have hope through Jesus that the fire *will* be put out, that the earth *will* be purified, and that creation *will* be restored. The world may be focused on a tiny flame, but God is focused on all of creation. There truly is hope.

You see, all of those books about the heart of Jesus, all those movies and all of that research can only provide you an explanation about the event. They can never provide you the *experience* of that event. They can never bring you peace. They can never bring you hope. They can never repair your broken heart. They can never bring you to the cross. The only thing that can, is God himself. And he does this through his word; he does this through the Lord's Supper. He pulls you in close to him and sets you down at the feet of his son where you are washed with the blood and water of Jesus. It is there where you find God's grace, God's mercy. It is there where Christ's wounded heart heals yours.

Let us pray.

The blood and water flowed from Him,
In streams of pure salvation.
The blood brings cleansing from all sin;
Water, regeneration.
And now the Spirit flows,
Brings God where'er He goes.
All he could do, the foe,
Was just release the flow.
And God just keeps on flowing