

## Luke 24:44-53

<sup>44</sup>He said to them, “These are my words, which I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

<sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

<sup>50</sup>He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup>And while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>So they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. <sup>53</sup>They were continually in the temple courts, praising and blessing God. Amen.

## Scarred Hands

### I.

Think about all of the pictures of Jesus you have seen. Obviously, they are all some artist’s conception. Often the picture has a gentle, yet strong, face. There are paintings of Jesus walking on the water to the boat filled with disciples, of him sleeping on a cushion aboard another boat, of Jesus carrying a lamb in his arms or on his shoulders, of little children all clustered around him as he urges the disciples to let the little children come to him.

Even the paintings of him hanging on the cross portray a Jesus who is strong and resolute. He has gone to that cross willingly—voluntarily—to pay for the sins of the world.

Any painting or portrait of Jesus that pictures him *after* the resurrection has one feature we might not think about so often: scars; scars from his wounds on the cross.

When you see people with scars, do you find that your eyes are naturally drawn to the reminders of some long-ago accident? Maybe you feel a little guilt when that’s the first thing you notice as you look at someone.

“He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them” (Luke 24:50, EHV). Do you think that the disciples’ eyes were drawn to Jesus’ hands as he lifted his arms? There were the scars. Gaping holes. Nail wounds from huge spikes that had gone through him to fasten Jesus to the cross.

Humanly speaking, those scarred hands marred an otherwise perfect picture. Jesus didn’t try to hide his hands. Instead, he raised those hands for everyone to see. Those nail-marked hands were the very hands he used to give his blessing to the disciples.

### II.

Often believers find it easy to revel in the glory of Jesus. They speak easily and proudly of Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords. They talk about Jesus as the One who will judge at the end of the world, giving a final verdict to all who have persecuted his Christians in this life.

Rarely do they talk about the scars. While Christians wear their crosses around their necks and hang them in their homes and churches, are they ashamed of the cross, of suffering, of the scars?

“He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup>And while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven” (Luke 24:50-51, EHV). Luke’s description of the ascension is rather brief. One thing, however, stands out clearly. Jesus did not hesitate to raise nail-pierced hands before his people.

He raised those scarred hands because his greatest glory is to be found in another event. Why were his hands pierced? Why did he suffer and die? His pierced hands were part of the obedient suffering and death he endured to free us from our sins and deliver us from the evils of the world.

It took scarred hands to save us. All of humanity shares a common shame—a scar that disfigures our hearts and our bodies. That common scar, that shame, is sin. Every emotional scar, the guilt we

bear, the hurt done to us—every illness that weakens our bodies, every accident that disfigures or dismembers, every genetic defect—is the result of sin.

The healing for every scar we carry because of sin is the cross. There we find God directing his attention specifically to our scarred lives, focusing on delivering us from death and disfigurement.

### III.

Personalize what the Lord Jesus has done with those scarred hands. Jesus died in *your* place. It was for *your* sin-scared life that holes were punched in the Savior's hands. You need not get what you deserve, because Jesus already *took* what you deserve. He did the same for me.

Think now about your greatest enemy. The person who is the proverbial thorn in your side, the person who gives you the hardest time. Jesus' scarred hands are for him or her, too. The Apostle Peter says: "He himself carried our sins in his body on the tree...By his wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24, EHV). He says: "Christ also suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Peter 3:18, EHV). Healing is accomplished by Jesus' death. Protection and deliverance are accomplished by Jesus' death. Our glory is found in scarred hands.

The very fact that Jesus lifted those scarred hands tells us that the risen Lord has made an effective sacrifice. With a loud and clear voice, Jesus said from the cross: "It is finished." His mission was completed. He died.

God raised his Son from the dead—not because there was something missing or left undone, but because the sacrifice accomplished what it set out to do. The condemnation of anyone's sin has been overcome.

Scarred hands, lifted up in the Savior's blessing, tell us that Jesus is the One who died for us. He has completed our salvation.

### IV.

Before he lifted up his hands in blessing to his followers, Jesus said to them: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms...<sup>46</sup> This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations" (Luke 24:44, 46-47, EHV).

On the basis of his sacrifice and glorious resurrection, the forgiveness of sins can now be announced to all in the name of Jesus Christ. Confess your sins daily. You can be sure that those beautifully scarred-for-us hands are raised in blessing over you.

Perhaps the most precious paintings of our Savior are those picturing him after the resurrection. You see in those paintings the scars on his hands. Those scars show what is most important in our lives.

Sometimes we put aside prayer time, Bible study time, worship time. We do so because we *think* there are more important things to be done. What we end up doing is setting aside Christ. Those things we think are so urgent don't have pierced hands. Your job doesn't make an eternal sacrifice for you. Your leisure activities don't offer forgiveness and salvation. Only one pair of hands is pierced for you—scarred for you. *Those* hands, in turn, bless all that we do.

God grant that he would keep Jesus' scarred hands raised before your eyes. Don't be ashamed of them. In his scarred hands are the marks of life. Amen.