
The Nail-Pierced Hands

“See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

If you had risen from the dead and wanted to show your friends that you were really alive, how would you demonstrate your resurrection to them? In the upper room on that first Sunday evening after His resurrection, Jesus used two lines of evidence to prove that He was alive after being dead—the proofs of feeling and fellowship.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples on this occasion, those who had not yet seen Him since His resurrection thought that they were seeing a ghost. Reading their thoughts, He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself . . .” (Luke 24:38, 39). John said that He then “showed them both His hands and His side” (John 20:20a). At this invitation to touch Him and confirm that He was really present with them, the disciples were filled with amazement. They did not fully comprehend the truth of His physical presence.

Luke said, “They still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement” (Luke 24:41a). It was then that our Lord utilized His second line of evidence, that of physical fellowship. He asked for something to eat, and they gave Him a piece of broiled fish. He ate it before them. By physically touching His hands and feet and by watching the Savior eat before them, they received overwhelming proof of His resurrection. None of them could deny it.

Can you imagine what this scene must have been like? Can any of us picture what it would have been like to touch the nail-pierced hands of Jesus? According to the Gospel records, His

scars were the only things Jesus showed His disciples after His resurrection. To look upon them would have been sufficient, but to touch them was the privilege of all privileges.

What did the nail-scarred hands of Jesus say to those who beheld them? What do they say to those of us who have read about them? Jesus never hid the scars of His crucifixion from His disciples. He let His companions see the scars and learn from them.

First, the nail-pierced hands of Jesus proved His crucifixion. Jesus had been physically nailed to a cross. He had remained upon the cross until most of His blood had drained from His body. His side had been punctured by a spear. In the worst kind of execution, He had offered Himself for our sins. When Jesus reached out to His disciples with His pierced hands, He was saying to them, “I am the One who died upon the cross. You may confirm that this is true by touching the prints of the nails in My hands.” He allowed His disciples to see and touch the marks of the passion in His body. His hands proved His crucifixion!

Second, they proved His victory over death. Jesus stood before them in a physical body that had mortal wounds in it, yet He was alive. For Jesus to stand among them and say, “Come, feel My hands and feet” was the most convincing evidence of His resurrection and His triumph over death.

Some of those in the upper room had witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion. They had seen much of the ghastly, horrible, pain-filled affair! A few, no doubt, had remained at the cross until He

was dead. Luke said that some of the women even followed Joseph and Nicodemus as they carried His body to the new tomb (Luke 23:55). There could be no doubt, no misunderstanding. The One standing before them was the Jesus whom they had seen crucified. His nailed-pierced hands were clear demonstrations of His victory over death. He had died, but He had walked out of the tomb and now was standing before His disciples!

Third, these nail-scarred hands proved His authority as our Savior. These hands gave full evidence that Jesus' word was good. Every promise He had made could be relied upon and completely trusted. He had told His apostles that He would be crucified and that He would rise on the third day (Matthew 16:21). His hands said, "I have kept My promise." He was the true and living Savior of the world; His resurrection from the dead proved it.

After convincing them that He was alive from the dead, Jesus began to tell them what He wanted them to do and what would happen next. He confirmed His authority with His nailed-pierced hands and then began to command them. They did not argue with Him. They did not say, "How can we evangelize the world? We are just a small group." The evidence that Jesus had given them was so complete that they knew that this One who had just risen from the dead could empower them to do whatever He needed them to do.

Fourth, these nailed-pierced hands proved that salvation came at a sacrificial price. There is no cheap salvation. Eternal life can only be procured through nail-pierced hands, nail-scarred feet, and a punctured side. Anyone who has seen the nail-printed hands of Jesus can never be the same. Paul wrote, "And He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Corinthians 5:15)

The cross not only presents to us the way of salvation, but it also helps us to visualize the true nature of the Christian life. The cross dynamically motivates us to be devoted to Christ and our service in His kingdom. Jesus only needs to show His scars, and people become martyrs for His cause. Perhaps the disciples did not understand this truth until they saw His wounded hands. He had told them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself,

and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Did they understand His words? Did they see their importance? Surely, they did after they had seen His nailed-scarred hands. Later, Paul would write, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24). Paul knew that following Christ often meant suffering; it might mean laying down one's life to give the message of salvation to others. Let us remember that Jesus' invitation to follow Him may very well be an invitation to suffer for His name's sake. Salvation does not come easily or without pain. Whenever a soul is won to Christ, a drop of blood can be found nearby.

Lord, when I am weary with toiling,
And burdensome seem Thy commands,
If my load should lead to complaining,
Lord, show me Thy Hands—
Thy nail-pierced Hands, Thy cross-torn Hands,
My Saviour, show me Thy Hands.

Christ, if ever my footsteps should falter,
And I be prepared for retreat,
If desert or thorn cause lamenting,
Lord, show me Thy Feet—
Thy bleeding Feet, Thy nail-scarred Feet,
My Jesus, show me Thy Feet.

O God, dare I show Thee
My hands and my feet?¹

With His scars, Jesus convinced the ten apostles and the other disciples who were present of His identity and His resurrection life. A week later, His scars moved Thomas from unbelief to belief, and he cried, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Jesus' hands, feet, and side tell us of the peace between heaven and earth that He has won for us. They issue His wonderful call to follow Him in service, sacrifice, and devotion. Think today of all that is bound up in the phrase "He showed them both His hands and His side" (John 20:20a).

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If you are not convinced that Jesus is the Christ, or if you do not know what your mission is, just look at His nail-pierced hands.

¹Brenton Thoburn Badley, "Show Me Thy Hands" (<http://www.joyfulministry.com/handsf.htm>; Internet; accessed 2 January 2007).