

Scars of the New Jesus People

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Scriptures: [Romans 8](#), [Matthew 16.24](#), [Galatians 5.17](#)

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## **Intro**

I want to look like Jesus. I want to think like Jesus. I want to act like Jesus. I want my kids to know what Jesus is like because of what they see in me. I don't want the world to see what Neil is like...I want them to see what Jesus is like.

Paul could tell those around him,

“imitate me as I imitate Christ” ([1 Corinthians 11.1](#)).

He told the Corinthians,

“I urge you to imitate me” ([1 Corinthians 4.16](#)).

He told the Philippians,

“Follow my example...the things which you heard and saw in me, do these things and the God of peace will be with you” ([Philippians 3.17](#), [4.9](#)).

Paul wasn't the same guy he used to be...he had become like Jesus...so much so that he could say before heaven and all those around him, “You want to be like Jesus, then do what I do.”

Paul knew,

“I have been crucified with Christ and my life is no longer my own”  
([Galatians 2.20](#)).

Paul wasn't Paul anymore, He was a man possessed by the Spirit of Jesus.

Was he perfect? No...there's only one perfect Man. But Paul knew that if he could let the Perfect One live His life through Paul, then he would be the man that God designed him to be when God spoke him into being.

So it makes sense that Paul would write things like [Romans 8.29](#),

“Those whom (God) foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren.”

(Q): What does it mean to be like Jesus?

Among many other things that it means to bear the image of Jesus, it must also mean that we are a people with scars. If He bears the scars of the cross that made Him King and Lord forever; then we are to bear the scars of the cross that He calls us to pick up and carry as we follow Him.

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16.24).

To walk in the ways of Jesus will require us to endure situations that leave marks on us. These scars bear witness that we have chosen the way of the cross...that we are no longer people of this world, we are people of the cross...and the cross always leaves a mark.

In Romans 8 Paul contrasts those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the Spirit, he says in v13, put to death the deeds of the flesh. He says something similar to the church of Galatians and tells them why...because,

"The flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want" (Galatians 5.17 - NIV).

Listen to that language; you have two opposing forces in you that are in conflict with one another over who will define your character. And one of those forces, our flesh, has the advantage, because it's actually the way that we want to act. But the teaching of Scripture is that you are NOT to do what it is that you actually would prefer to do. And it's that act of violence against the way of living how we want, the way of living that we inherited from Adam, the way of living that the world says is ok, it's the spiritual act of violence against that way of living that is going to leave a mark.

But this isn't bad news...it's actually good news. The fact that we are in a battle means we are alive. It means that we aren't slaves to sin and our own selfishness. Those who are not in Christ don't have the choice...their flesh is their master. But Jesus has set us free from ourselves. Yes it's hard, and yes we must choose the way of the Spirit, but praise God that we have the choice!

"Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh"

(Galatians 5.16).

The Spirit and the flesh may be in conflict, but the scars that are left behind as the Spirit conquers the flesh become evidence that we are no longer people ruled by our flesh...we are people of the Spirit...we are a New Jesus People.

### **Scars**

When we think of scars, we think of marks that are left on our body by some sort of violent event. Something happened that inflicted a blow on us...it was an act of aggression that was so severe the flesh is never the same again. The scar becomes a story, a witness to an event, a marker in time. To the world scars are not something to be desired. But to the people of the cross, scars are beautiful.

At this very moment there is a Man seated on a throne in the kingdom of heaven with scars on His body. He rose from the dead but resurrection didn't remove those scars, it confirmed the event that inflicted the wounds that healed into scars. His scars are beautiful. They announce His character; they tell us that He is a God of covenant love and sacrifice. His scars announce to all of creation that death and sin have been defeated. Those scars on that Man on that throne will forever serve as evidence that our God loved us so much that He took on flesh and then allowed that flesh to be torn so that we can live. That's the story that His scars tell.

### **Sufferings of This Present Age**

Paul writes in **Romans 8.18** that he considers the "sufferings of this present age" to not even be worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us in the age to come.

What are the "sufferings of this present age" that Paul refers to?

Are they physical beatings and torturings? For some, yes. Many of our brothers and sisters will bear the marks of the cross on their bodies with literal scars. And others may not. But even if we are never asked to bear the marks of our faith on our bodies, all true disciples

of Jesus will have the marks of the cross on their souls. We must pay the price to cultivate His nature in our own lives...and that's going to leave a mark.

A servant is no greater than his master ([John 13.16](#)). And if the Master has scars, then so will His people. While we may not ever be called bear His scars on our physical bodies, to be conformed to His image means we will bear the scars of putting to death the deeds of the flesh. While His scars tell the story of love that gave itself for the world, our scars tell the story of every time we chose to deny ourselves and follow Him.

The death of pride is going to leave a mark.

Crucifying our selfishness will leave a mark.

The uprooting of greed will leave a mark.

Choosing to forgive, striving to enter into His rest, believing when there is no evidence will leave a mark.

Responding to the spirit of wisdom who calls out in the streets when everyone else runs to the spirit of Babylon will leave a mark.

Living passionately devoted to first love for Jesus when the world says "love yourself" will leave a mark.

These are the marks of a people conformed to the image of Jesus...they are the scars of the New Jesus People.

We simply cannot walk in the way of Jesus and live scar-free. Bob Gladstone wrote in *Marks of the Cross*,

"We cannot live and love well in this world without injury."

Jesus was very clear, all who chose to follow Him will be opposed ([John 16.33](#)). Obedience to His word will produce persecution and tribulation ([Mark 4.17](#)).

Those who have no root in them will stumble when difficulties come. But those who understand that this is just the way of the kingdom will allow themselves to suffer the wounds of being made more like Jesus. And the hope that we have as followers of Christ is that those wounds will heal into glorious scars.

Gladstone continues,

"The scars that all believers bear on their souls mark the time we allowed pain to become the path into the mystery of the cross. They mark the time we suffered the

loss of one of our rights in order to walk the way of the Messiah. This is what forges His character into us. Jesus paid the price so that we could receive His life without a cost. And now that we have received new life, He calls us to work that new life into our relationships, our behavior, our thoughts.”

Our salvation and our adoption into the family of God was given to us freely, but that sonship is not developed cheaply. We were purchased with blood, but we are matured by fire. Living with the character of Christ is costly. Having His character formed in us requires sacrifice...because His character is so opposed to our nature. Betrayal, disappointments, frustrations, struggle; God uses all of these things to shape us into the image of His Son.

To cultivate the life of His Spirit, we must bear the marks of His cross. These marks become the scars of the people who are following after Jesus. They are the character traits of Jesus that grow from the wounds of denying themselves. These scars become evidence that Christ’s resurrection power is now animating their lives.

### **The Scars of the New Jesus People**

I want to spend the next few weeks looking at some of the scars that the New Jesus People will bear. These are some of the marks and scars of the New Jesus People that we will discuss:

1. Forgiveness
2. Generosity
3. Rest
4. Humility and Meekness
5. Faith
6. Wisdom
7. First love for Jesus

As the Spirit develops these qualities in us it will leave wounds on our flesh.

Choosing to walk in forgiveness is going to injure our selfishness.

Choosing to be generous with our finances and resources will wound our fear of not having enough.

Choosing humility will bring violence against our pride.

But as Gladstone says,

"healed wounds are signposts to something greater. If we allow the resistance to become a hammer, and God's Word a chisel, then He will mold us into the image of His Son."

And the wounds will turn into scars that constitute our Christ-like character.

For the revealing of such a people in the earth, creation eagerly waits ([Romans 8.19](#)).

Gladstone writes,

"Developing Christ's image during this age of spiritual warfare is when it counts. We will not have this opportunity after the resurrection."

If we spent half as much effort crucifying our flesh as we do fighting the devil, or pursuing personal deliverance, we would be transformed into glorious sons and daughters that radiate like a trillion sons. The devil is not keeping you from glowing...another prayer for deliverance isn't what you need to become incandescent. What's needed is for you to deny yourself, crucify your flesh by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit, and learn how to choose the way of Jesus in everyday life.

Be the first to forgive, even when it hurts.

Love...even when you are dishonored.

Consider others as more important than yourself.

Let go of the offense.

Resist the desire for personal justice.

Live with integrity.

Be extravagantly generous with what you have and roll the burden of financial hardship on the Lord.

Humble yourself in the midst of conflict and for the sake of unity.

Sacrifice your need to be right.

Go low.

Serve.

When there's work to be done, be the first to show up and the last to leave...do everything as if you are doing it for Christ.

Strive to enter His rest.

Cook a meal for someone.

Babysit.

Help your neighbor move.

Buy someone lunch.

Write thank you notes.

We should be the kindest, most generous, loving people in the Central Coast. Why? Because the Lord is giving us a revelation of what it means to be the family of God...to truly be the dwelling place that He longs to see in the earth. He is asking us to course correct generations of muscle memory in the church. But at some point, the beautiful things that we talk about in here have to look like something out there in everyday life. The devil's not keeping you from loving others more than yourself. You getting another prophetic word, or another prayer for deliverance, isn't going to cause you to walk in humility for the sake of unity. What's needed is actually much simpler than that; consciously determine to yield to the Spirit who is in you...who longs to form the character of Christ into your life. Yes, it will leave a mark...a beautiful, glorious, eternal scar the shows the world what Jesus looks like.

What could be more fulfilling in life than walking in the Spirit and choosing His ways over the ways of immediate gratification of our flesh? We dilute the glory of who the Holy Spirit actually is when we relegate Him to an experience in a worship service. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave lives in us...and the promise of **Romans 8.11** is that just as He empowered Jesus to walk out of the grave with scars that proved He had defeated Adam, so too will He give life to your mortal bodies and b you walk in victory over everything you inherited from Adam, too.

I'll close with these words from Gladstone, "In the kingdom people with scars radiate. They shine with the brightness of the sun. The accumulated marks of the cross make mature disciples incandescent. Does not every scar that marks a loss become an aperture through which resurrection life beams? This is why Jesus' glorified body will always bear the scars of His death....so welcome the scars that mark the losses of worthless things. If trading fools gold for eternal gold leaves marks, be proud of those marks. In the end fools gold will be possessed by those after whom it is named. They will die with no scars...and

no gold. Scars are evidence of a life lived in love. And love is the main virtue of the mature. Just as love left its mark on Jesus' body forever, so it will leave its mark on us. Don't despise these scars. They testify of the character we will take into the age to come.”

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us...and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His son” (Romans 8.18, 28-29).