

2nd S. in Lent 3/16/25
Philippians 3:17-4:1 C

The Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

Do you have any scars? Well, Pastor has a few memorable scars. Like most of you of my generation, the smallpox vaccination left a scar. I have a scar on my side from when I was a kid and campfire set my shirt on fire. Even though they are small, I still have the three incision scars reminding me where the surgeon went in to cut the cancer from the body.

What about you? Do you have any scars? Today Paul says, *The Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body.* These words assure us that the same bodies that have died will rise on the day Jesus comes in glory and Paul tells us we will rise with a “glorious” body. Our lowly body, subject to death and decay, will be no more. And honestly, I think its fair to say since the day Paul first wrote those words, Christians have wondered what will our glorious body be like on the day of the resurrection of all flesh? Will they bear the marks of sin, the marks of a fallen world full of infirmity and accidents, will we still bear the marks of sins that others have committed against us?

I. It’s a fact of life in this world that our lowly bodies bear scars.

There’s a famous scene in the move “Jaws” where the boys in the boat are sitting around and showing off, bragging, about their scars. What happened was the police chief got a lump on his head and Quint, the boat’s captain, jokes, “Don’t worry, Chief, it won’t be permanent”. Which leads them to display their scars as badges of honor – the permanent lump on the head, the tooth that comes out, the eel bite on the arm, the shark attack on the calf, the heart broken by Mary Ellen Moffit. Which leads Quint to

show the deep scar on his forearm, where he had cut a tattoo out of his own flesh, a tattoo of the USS Indianapolis. You remember the story of the Indianapolis, right? In the movie, Quint was a survivor from the “Indy,” as she was called.

In July, 1945, the Indy completed a top-secret mission of delivering the “Little Boy” atomic bomb that would later be dropped on Hiroshima to a Pacific island. On her return voyage home, she was torpedoed by the Japanese and sank in 12 minutes. 300 of her crew went down with the ship. 890 sailors entered the ocean waters. Because her mission was top secret and there was confusion over radio messages, it was four days before only 316 of those sailors were rescued. With few lifeboats and almost no food or water, many died drowning and dehydration. But most died from shark attacks.

In fact, in the Movie, Quint recounts swimming to his friend bobbing in the water, only to find out that he has been bitten in half below the waist by a shark. Yes, it was a movie, but the point stands – that even the memory of that ship on his forearm was a source of torture.

I asked you a minute ago: do you have an scars? From surgery; the childhood bike accident; the time the knife slipped when we were peeling carrots?

We’re proud of some of those scars; we brag about them. They’re even fodder for a good laugh.

Other scars, well other scars, we wear long sleeves or makeup to coverup, with the hope and prayer that no one will ever see them. Other scars, well other scars, aren’t seen on our skin, but they’re there. They’re the mental, emotional scars we have. And we just can’t seem to find a big

enough or sharp enough knife to go in and cut the memory out, because no matter how hard we try to forget, it's there, always a source of torture.

Life in a sinful world leaves scars, doesn't it?

II. Look at Jesus. God in man made manifest. Born of virgin mother, He has beautiful flesh, without spot or blemish. He's born to redeem you from all the sin and death that caused those scars that you bear.

The Son of God does it by becoming sin for you. And look at the wounds and scars that sin cause Him. He's flogged, beaten, crowned with thorns. Nails are driven through his hands and foot into the wood of the cross. A spear pierces His side, bring forth water and blood from His body.

That's the physical wounds of sin, but I think it's also fair to say look at the mental, emotional, spiritual wounds, as well. His came to His own people, to save them from sin, death, and hell, but they did not receive Him (Jn 1:11). His own family thought He was out of His mind (Mk 3:21). His disciples, who vowed to go to Jerusalem and die with Him, who vowed they would never betray Him, fled from Him as fast as their little foot could run and denied ever knowing Him.

And, He dies – for you, in your place, for all of your sins. And, He's raised to life again the 3rd day as God's absolution to the entire world that your sins are gone, forgiven, in Jesus.

III. That Easter resurrection of your Lord Christ the 3rd day means that God is, indeed, making all things new.

Wednesday night, I mentioned Baptismal certificates, that originally and for many centuries they were large what we would call "posters," designed and intended to be hung on the wall, to remind you of who and what you are in Christ – a new creation without spot or blemish.

There was another great and marvelous custom in the history of the Church that had to do with the design of the baptismal font itself – the font was always 8-sided. Why 8? Inquiring minds want to know, so I'll tell you: How many days in a week? 7. The 8th day signifies the new creation that we become in the font of Holy Baptism. We die to sin and all unholiness and ungodliness, to rise to a new life in Christ.

That means that though there is but a step between you and death, you have no fear of death, Dear Child of God. Every morning that you wake up and see your baptismal certificate, and your first thought is: Today is the day the day I could go home to be with Jesus. Just as the children of Israel safely passed through the Red Sea waters, we simply pass through the gate of death to be in the glories of Paradise.

But, for you Dear Child of God, there is even better news. Death is the separation of the mortal body from the eternal soul. But, we must ever remember that God never intended the body and the soul to be apart. So on the day that Jesus comes again in all of His glory, the dead will hear His voice and rise imperishable. Again, Paul says it in our lesson, *the Lord Jesus Christ will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.*

Christians have wondered and pondered the question of what will a glorious, resurrected body be like? St. Paul is clear that we will rise with imperishable bodies – that means not subject to decay. In the new heaven and the new earth, there is no sin, and that means no curse of sin and no wages of sin, death. For you and me, My Friends, that means no aches and pains, no weakness and infirmity in your body. No joints that wear out and need replacing. No ears that lose their ability to hear. No eyes that

dim, but only eyes that see the beauty of Jesus forever and ever without end.

And along with the curse of sin, the Good News of the life to come is that all memory of sin is gone. Remember what God said? *“Behold, I am making all things new”* (Re 21:5). And the Bible also says: God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

What are the closing words of the Bible? Revelation 22:20, *He who testifies to these things says, “surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.