

assures us, God will reveal how he turned to our good even our diseases and injuries and death. As Dorothy Sayers once put it in her essay, *"Creed or Chaos"*, what this astounding promise really means is that God is determined to perfect us through our suffering by the power he has "to wrench a real good out of a real evil." For now, he gives us Christ, himself afflicted with pain, to be with us for comfort. And whoever accepts this consolation and encouragement, really is consoled and encouraged.

—Ron Lutjens



From The Rising Of The Sun

By Paul Deming

Words to song are in the print copy.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Old Orchard Church

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 17, 2013 — 10:15-11:50 a.m.

What you, my Lord, have suffered,
was all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but yours the deadly pain.

Celebrating Jesus, Divine Son of Man: Afflicted With Pain

~ Jesus of the Scars ~

If we never sought, we seek Thee now;
Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;
We must have sight of thorn-pricks on Thy brow,
We must have Thee, O Jesus of the Scars.

The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;
In all the universe we have no place.
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?
Lord Jesus, by Thy Scars we claim Thy grace.

If when the doors are shut, Thou drawest near,
Only reveal those hands, that side of Thine;
We know today what wounds are, have no fear,
Show us Thy Scars, we know the countersign.

The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone.

—Edward Shillito, *World War I soldier*



Scripture Readings

Gospel Lesson: Pearl-string on Christ's pre-crucifixion pain
(John 18:19-23; Mark 14:61-65; Mark 15:1-5; Mark 15:15-20)

Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 4:5-10; 7:5; 6:3-11

Christianity in Ephesus, Christianity in St. Louis Series

"Kingdom Warriors—In Kingdom Rehab"
Ephesians 4:17-32

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

Our Bodies, Our Selves

When God says he loves us, he means he loves our bodies. He made our body to be a part of our self. But if he loves us even so far as loving our bodies, why does he not protect our bodies better than he does? Why does he give Satan so much leash in our lives? Why does God commonly allow the bodies of elderly believers to languish to the point where they feel degraded and humiliated? Why does Ann Stuber's sister's cancer return—when she has children to care for? Why are infants of believing parents born with crippling disabilities? Why are Christians murdered? Why are we praying for each other with new petitions each week for new injuries, diseases and bodily afflictions contracted? Why?

It is true that **the bondage to decay** we all experience in our bodies is the result of sin coming into the world in Eden. But this doesn't solve the why question for us, because one of the very things God promises is that he will protect from bodily harm those who trust him:

If you make the Most High your dwelling.... then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone....

(Psalm 91:9-12, 14)

Satan quoted that to Jesus when he tried to entice him to take a flying leap off the temple roof, implying it was a divine promise that he would land on his uncut feet, unhurt. But we have learned from experience—ours as well as the experience of the Bible's own heroes—that what you can truly "bank on" in these promises is not protection from *all* harm but from *ultimate* harm. In the end, the apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 8, our bodies will be "redeemed"—put beyond injury, decay, and death forever.

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:23)

That's in the end. What about now?

For now we do have protections and healings and rescues and scientific medical breakthroughs. And some of them are dramatic. We should share them with each other and find encouragement in them, and thank God for them. But you cannot bank on them; they are not part of what every believer is promised. There is mystery in the way the divine mercies are bestowed: *unevenly*.

Then can we count on nothing absolutely for here and now? Yes we can. We can count on Christ in his High Priestly work of sympathizing with us in our weakness. To every last one of us who trusts him, Christ promises that in our bodily afflictions he is near to us—*not only by the power of divine omnipresence but also by the power of a common human experience of pain and injury*. In the end, Romans 8:28

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