

Scar Stories

Easter 2A
John 20:19-31

Slide: Harry Potter Scar

Just about everyone I know has a scar story. Maybe you have a good one. You know what I mean by scars. You fall off your bike as a kid, cut yourself in your wood working shop, or you get your finger caught in the spring of your door while trying to get a bat out of the house – that’s a true story. You should ask Jim about that one.

Slide: Campfire

As a kid, I remember my friends and I showing each other’s scars to see who had the grossest, most gnarly scar. For the most part, I always won that contest. For, my scar story is pretty scary. I was ten years old and decided to walk over people’s legs right next to a campfire at our

campsite. We were roasting marshmallows and I couldn’t be bothered to go around everyone, so I jumped over someone’s legs and fell right into the fire.

I barely knew what was happening before I felt someone grab me around my waist and pull me up and out of that fire, but not before I had really been burned. I had three degree burns on the entire left side of my torso, plus burns on my arm and hands. I’m lucky. People say they never saw my Dad move so fast in his life.

I bore the scars of my stupidity for years. I refused to wear a two piece bathing suit as long as it was there. It’s been a lot of years now and I thought those scars would be there forever, but they have now completely healed. You can barely see them, but I know they are still there. To this day, I never walk in front of a campfire. I always walk around.

Slide: Harrison Ford

One of the more famous scar stories is that of this handsome guy – Harrison Ford. I adored him when I was a kid because he was Han Solo and Indiana Jones. At age 21, he was in a car accident and hit his chin on the steering wheel. He did not get medical attention or stitches and because of that, he got that famous scar on his chin. For some time, he didn't get movie gigs because of that scar, but George Lucas liked it and thought it gave him swagger appeal. Today, Harrison Ford is known for his scar. It's his trademark.

What is your scar story? Do you have physical scars that remain? Are there mental, psychological, or emotional scars that walk with you? I'm certain they have a story to tell.

Slide: Christ's Hands

At the start of our Gospel story today, scars abound. The disciples are behind locked doors out of fear. They heard the Good News Mary Magdalene

brought them that Christ had Risen – she had seen the Lord! But, they didn't believe her. Their scars were emotional ones. All of them had run away when the going got tough, with exception of the Beloved Disciple, who was at the cross with the mother of Jesus. But, none of them believed. Maybe they even didn't want to in their fear and shame.

This is why I find it interesting that when Jesus first appears to them, they don't seem to know that it is Jesus or believe it is until he shows them his scars. Listen to how the Gospel writer says it:

"...Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord."

Here Jesus is. How he gets in a locked room is a mystery. That he can apparently appear into thin

air or walk through walls doesn't seem to faze them, and they don't even seem to know him when he says, "Peace be with you." But, the moment he shows them his hands, his scars, they see him for who he is – the crucified and wounded Lord.

Slide: Thomas and Jesus

And then, because Thomas isn't with them, he too, won't believe as the others didn't believe Mary Magdalene, but he goes further to emphasize this scar story:

"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails AND my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Thomas wants to experience the scars themselves. Only when Jesus tells him to do so, does Thomas believe.

This isn't just a story about faith or belief. This story doesn't just give us a taste of being blessed because we believe without

seeing. Sure, it's also about that faith. But, we sit here today because we believe. We do not need always to see. The disciples had the luxury of the appearance of Jesus to help them. We don't.

Therefore, this story, this emphasis of scars and wounds, and touching and seeing them is significant. For, why does Jesus still have them? If God can raise Jesus from the dead, than surely God can erase scars. Why does Jesus continue to have those reminders of the torture, the shame, and the death of the cross?

Slide: By His Wounds...

Unless it is precisely those scars that make the Resurrection real and significant. For, what's the use of rising from the dead if Christ had not died in the first place? These wounds, these scars remind us yet again of the Incarnation – of that time when Jesus was born of a human mother, who took on flesh and bones, ate with us, prayed

with us, lived with us and died as we all die. This Incarnation, God with us, still bears the reminder that God, for a time in this universe, was one of us.

These scars are necessary reminders of Christ's humanity. And, as these scars were necessary for the torture and death of our Lord, they are the wounds that also heal us: As Christ was wounded, so too, he was raised.

The writer of 1 Peter chapter 2 said it best:

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

Slide: Best Scar Story Ever

Without the scar story of Jesus, that of his crucifixion, we have a hard time making sense of the Risen Lord. It means that just as Jesus has scars, God is able to enter into our stories

of scars, shown and hidden, physical and otherwise. And, it was the revealing of the wounds of Jesus that the disciples were finally able to heal from their own denial and desertion of Jesus and accept that Christ had indeed risen. Through his wounds, they were able to know forgiveness, hope, and resurrection joy.

Slide: We bear the marks

Today, we too carry scars hidden or otherwise. We know what it is to have friends deny us, too. We know what it is to lose loved ones and for some of us to lose health, home or vocation: We, too, long for the joy of the Resurrection.

And here, in these waters of baptism, we can find both the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In these waters, we die with Christ and we rise with Christ. At our baptisms, those scars of Jesus were traced upon our foreheads. It may not be visible, but those wounds are there. We carry with us in our bodies

the scars of our savior.
Christ walks with us,
wounded still.

Slide: Jesus leaving tomb

But, in those wounds,
still visible on the body of
Jesus, those wounds bring
us also to the resurrection of
Jesus. He lives! For he has
been raised! And, that new
risen life is the hope we have
each and every day as we
begin with a new start
through these very waters,
through these very promises
of God for hope here in the
present and hope also for
eternal life.

For, Christ is Risen!
He is risen indeed! And, in
his wounds, we have been
healed.

Amen