

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

Not Fearing Our Wounds

“Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see.’”

—The Gospel of John

By Ken Woodley

Jesus wasn't afraid of his wounds.

They plainly showed.

He did not try to hide them.

He points them out to his disbelieving disciples as proof that he has risen from the dead and that he is no ghost.

The disciples evidently believed that they were being haunted rather than visited by their risen Savior. That is why Jesus invites them to touch him, to touch his wounds, so that their haunted fears may vanish.

No, Jesus was not afraid of his wounds.

And he invited others to touch them.

By touching his wounds, Jesus knew, his disciples would be healed of the raw anxiety that was so destructive to the life Jesus hoped they would live after his crucifixion and resurrection.

Jesus offers us a great lesson.

Like Jesus, we should not be afraid of our wounds, either.

A wound is more than a cut, bruise or scratch, and all of us are wounded in some way. Nobody goes through life wound-free.

Some are wounded more deeply than others but there are no trivial wounds. Wounds are terribly real. For that reason it can be easy to be afraid of them, perhaps even ashamed. We want to hide them from others. Hide them from ourselves. Pretend they don't exist.

But running from our wounds is not the path toward healing.

Instead, trying to escape leads to us feeling hunted and haunted by our wounds, just as the disciples were hunted and haunted by the wounding loss of Jesus in their lives when he was crucified. That escapist mentality makes the wound worse, not better.

No, we don't have to parade our wounds around or make a big song and dance about them. There is no "Wound Olympics." It's not a competition.

But we do need to acknowledge them, believe that we can live with them and, crucially, be open to the way God can bring healing through the loving touch of others in our lives.

Because, so often, that is the way God reaches out to us. The way the risen Christ is able to anoint our heads with oil and restore our soul:

By bringing someone into our life who is not afraid of our wounds and who seeks, through loving compassion, to bring us healing.

But, the healing of wounds is a double-edge plowshare. Sometimes the effect of our own wounding empowers us to be effective healers of others. Sometimes the shape of our lives fits perfectly into the wound of someone else.

Therefore, just as we must not be afraid of our own wounds, we also must not fear the wounds of others. We must not be afraid to touch their wounds with God's loving purpose that can, if we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, have our fingerprints all over that touch of divine grace.

And, sometimes, when we reach out with that divine healing grace toward others, we find God reaching out to us through them. Our reach meets theirs and in that moment God's love for us is made most profoundly manifest.

That is a truth worth embracing with all of our might.