

ENCOUNTERING GOD SERIES

# THE 7 WOUNDS OF JESUS

A PERSONAL RETREAT

Step into freedom....



A RHYTHMS OF GRACE PUBLICATION

# WELCOME!

***He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem.***

***Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted.***

***But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.***

**[Isaiah 53:3-6]**

That Friday when Jesus was crucified was the most important day in the history of mankind; it was the day the world changed. Our conversion experiences usually centre upon forgiveness for our sins, which is truly wonderful, but is only a portion of what was accomplished for us on the cross.

The crucifixion is the answer to every issue, problem or concern faced by man. Hanging on the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the distress of the ages. And because the Resurrection followed, we know He triumphed in every area.

A scriptural study of the topic reveals a breadth in what was accomplished, which is hidden from a cursory reading. For example, did you know that the Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, used in Isaiah's amazing prophecy, means 'completeness, wholeness, safety, soundness, welfare, health, prosperity, contentment, peace in human relationships, peace with God, and peace from war? And all addressed by the Cross!

This ezine is designed to enable you to make a personal retreat with the following aims:

- To reflect on the purpose & power of the blood of Jesus
- To apply that blood to the real issues of your life
- To begin to walk free, or to accelerate your progress
- To encounter the Lord who loves you & gave His life so you could be free.

Jesus paid an astonishing price so that we could live free. All the benefits outlined in this magazine are *potentially* ours, but it is our responsibility to take hold of them, and see them worked out in our lives. For some, freedom will come in an instant, for others over a period, but for all, freedom is a journey, not an event. Let's get started today.....

## PREPARATION

Set aside a portion of uninterrupted time; you will need 3-4 hours for the whole retreat, or it can be done over the course of a week, taking each of the seven reflections on the blood, on consecutive days. If splitting the retreat like this, you may find it helpful to re-read the introduction, before each section. You may also wish to fast, as fasting sharpens the spiritual senses and helps the process of revelation.

### **You will need:**

- Two short pieces of wood hammered together to make a rough cross, with the hammer and additional nails available.
- Your bible
- A spiral bound notebook & pen for journaling.
- A small bread roll & some red wine or juice, if you intend to break bread at the end of the retreat (see closing section).

## INTRODUCTION

Adam was made to bear the image of God. He was given the royal task of ruling over the Lord's creation and was promised a fruitful and blessed life. He was to look to the Lord to provide for his every need, and lived without fear or shame in the presence of God. A companion of the same type was given to him, and together they were to produce offspring with the same calling. They were to walk in step with the Lord who would teach them His ways, moment by moment.

When Adam & Eve rebelled, all this was lost. Instead of life forever in intimacy with God, they were banished from the Garden, and from His presence; the way to the Tree of Life was barred, and death and fear entered their lives. Instead of fruitful, fulfilling and blessed labour, their lives became one of toil, wresting a living from the ground. Rulership of the earth passed into the hands of the Evil One, to whom they had submitted when they had chosen to obey him instead of God. Sin entered the world and the hearts of men, so they were no longer able to stand in righteousness before the Father. The whole world became subject to death and decay, including the bodies of men and women, who succumbed to sickness and disease. Instead of bearing the image of God, mankind was covered with shame; instead of receiving moment by moment the provision of God, mankind was reduced to toil and labour; instead of a fulfilling calling and destiny, the human race lost their God-given sense of self, and received instead a demonically inspired sense of worth, through success at others' expense. The human race was enslaved.

Jesus came with one mission: to restore all that Adam had lost<sup>1</sup>. By His life He showed us what it is to be a man walking in righteousness, in harmony with God. He showed us a life of freedom, a life fulfilled, a life submitted to the Father, and a life of health.

When Jesus died, it was by His will and choice; no person or satanic power took it from Him. He died so that we could be set free to have the life Adam had lost. Through the shedding of His blood the fallen human condition was dealt with.

We read in the Old Testament, that on the Day of Atonement, blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, on the Ark of the Covenant, seven times by the High Priest<sup>2</sup>. In the New Testament, Jesus, our High Priest, shed His own blood seven times on our behalf.

The blood of Jesus shouts, like the blood of Abel shouted from the ground<sup>3</sup>, only Abel's blood shouted for vengeance; Jesus' blood shouts for mercy and deliverance. Jesus' blood was shed so that everything lost by Adam and Eve might be restored to humanity. The Father's intent was that He might have many sons and daughters who would walk with Him like Jesus walked<sup>4</sup>. Our job is to believe, and walk in the freedom purchased at so great a price.

## REFLECT:

Read the introduction through again. Take some time to reflect on all the benefits enjoyed by Adam & Eve which were lost at the Fall. List them in your journal.

Then read the following passages. Make another list of the advantages purchased through the Cross, and then give thanks.

***Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. [Hebrews 10:19-22]***

***For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation. [Colossians 1:19-22]***

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. [Colossians 2:13-15]*

*For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. [Romans 5:17-18]*

## HOW CAN WE LIVE IN THE GOOD OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE?

**Exercise Faith:** We receive all the benefits bought by the blood of Jesus in the same way as we receive forgiveness: by faith. It is not dependent on how we feel or the way our circumstances look, but on taking Jesus at His word. For some aspects there may be immediate and visible changes, for others we may have to persevere to produce 'a crop'.

**Have repentant hearts:** We need to acknowledge before the Father our failure to take hold of all that Jesus purchased for us. And we need to commit the rest of our lives to making sure that He achieves in us what He paid for, for even creation groans waiting for the sons and daughters of God to be revealed<sup>5</sup>. In order to receive what has been won for us, we have to change our way of thinking, and get into agreement with God. 'To change our way of thinking' is the fundamental meaning of the Greek word used for 'repentance' in the New Testament.

**Declare the truth:** What we say is important. The tongue, says Proverbs, holds the power of life and death<sup>6</sup>. In Revelation we read that the saints overcame the Evil One by the 'blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony'<sup>7</sup>. If we declare the power of the blood continually over our lives and circumstances, we will see the dominion of God manifesting.

## HOW TO WORK THROUGH THE REFLECTIONS

**Be quiet:** Find a peaceful spot & get really still inside, becoming centred on Christ. Ask the Lord to come close, and then turn your heart towards Him

**Read:** For each section, read the Scriptures quoted, and look up any references; then read the accompanying comment.

**Pray:** Show me.....

Ask Jesus to reveal the issues in your life that this application of blood deals with. And any lies you have believed in relation to it.

**Listen:** to what the Lord says to you, & write everything down on a clean page in your notebook. (You will tear each one out later.)

**Give thanks:** for Jesus' shed blood, specifying the particular aspect, and what it has done for you.

For example, *'Thank You for the blood you sweated on the ground. That blood was shed for my rebellion, my unruly will. It covers it all. I surrender my will to You, especially in the area of.....'*

*I choose to believe that Your blood has set me free from the desire to sin, and I ask for Your Holy Spirit to empower me to live in obedience to You.'*

**Nail it down:** Lay down before Him the issues He has raised, by nailing the appropriate page to the cross. This is a physical expression of a profound truth.

**Declare the truth:** As mentioned above, what we say is important. So declare over yourself: 'Through the power of Jesus' blood shed for me, I am free.'

# THE REFLECTIONS

## SWEATING BLOOD

***And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. [Luke 22:44]***

The first shedding of blood was in the Garden of Gethsemane. We read that as Jesus agonised over His impending death, He sweated great drops of blood. We know He won that battle decisively, the 'second Adam's' will was completely submitted to the Father. And, therefore, it is to our wills that the first application of the blood of Jesus is made, that we too would be able to choose to live in obedience to the Father. In addition, through this shed blood, the inner inclination to sin was also dealt with, opening up the way for God to work in us, *to will* and *to do* His good pleasure<sup>8</sup>.

## SCOURGING

***Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed Him over to be crucified. [Mark 15:15]***

***He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. [Isaiah 53:5]***

Jesus' arrest followed the scene in Gethsemane, and after appearing before the High Priest, He was taken away and brutally beaten. This type of scourging was well known to kill people before the actual execution took place. As the lead-laced flail tore His flesh, Jesus took upon Himself mankind's sickness and disease, fulfilling the words of Isaiah, 'By these stripes we were healed'.<sup>9</sup> The Hebrew word for 'healed' in this passage, is the same one used of the Lord in Exodus 15:26, when He declared, '*I am the Lord who heals you*'. Every kind of physical and emotional ailment was covered by these savage wounds. Jesus died so we could be well – in every respect.

## CROWN OF THORNS

***They put a purple robe on Him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Him. [Mark 15:17]***

After Jesus had been beaten, a crown of thorns was jammed on His head. When Adam and his race were condemned to toil and struggle, it was said that the ground would bear thorns and thistles<sup>10</sup>. As Jesus' blood trickled down His face from the vicious barbs, the curse of that unfruitfulness was broken. No longer would man have to bear the torment of unproductive labour. In addition, that shed blood released the total provision of the Father for His children's needs, the provision that Adam and Eve had first enjoyed, and then lost; the provision that Jesus had demonstrated throughout His ministry. The curse of poverty was broken.

## BEATEN HEAD

***They spat on Him, and took the staff and struck Him on the head again and again. [Matthew 27:30]***

Then we read that Jesus was taken away and beaten around the head, wounds which promised deliverance from every mental problem encountered by humankind, and opened up the opportunity for the promised 'sound mind<sup>11</sup>', the mind of Christ<sup>12</sup>.

The head is also the symbol of authority. The shedding of blood here was in order that the proper authority in the earth, lost by Adam and Eve, would be restored to man. The rule of the Evil One was over. And when the Lord of All submitted to being beaten by mere humans, He bore gross indignity, so that man could be set free from shame. Adam had been made in the image of God; by the time these tortures had finished, Jesus must have been almost unrecognisable. He suffered it all so that humanity could again display the glory of the Father.

## NAIL-PIERCED HANDS

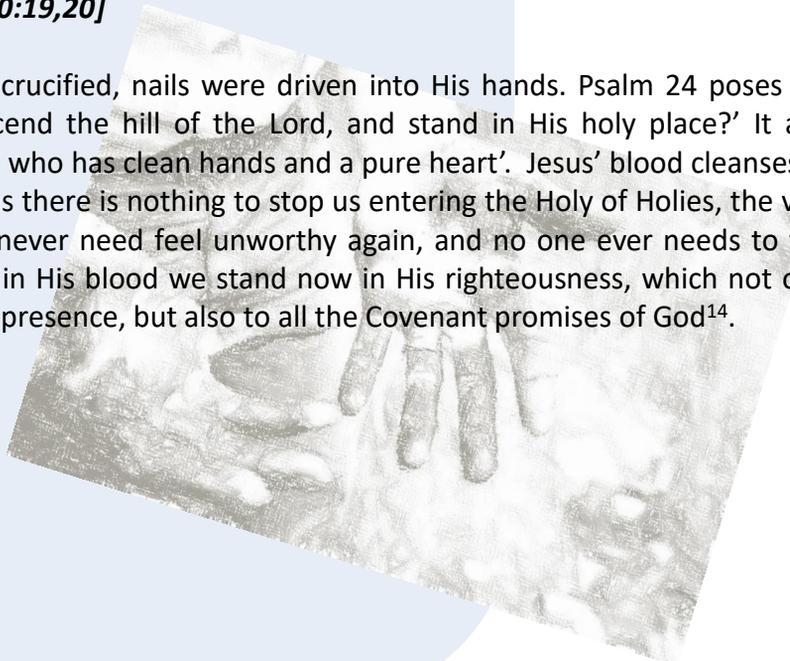
***It was nine in the morning when they crucified Him. [Mark 15:25]***

***As He spoke, He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! [John 20:20]***

***Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart..... [Psalm 24:3,5]***

***Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, [Hebrews 10:19,20]***

When Jesus was finally crucified, nails were driven into His hands. Psalm 24 poses the question: 'who may ascend the hill of the Lord, and stand in His holy place?' It also supplies the answer: 'He who has clean hands and a pure heart'. Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin, which means there is nothing to stop us entering the Holy of Holies, the very presence of God<sup>13</sup>. We never need feel unworthy again, and no one ever needs to feel excluded. Through faith in His blood we stand now in His righteousness, which not only opens up the way to His presence, but also to all the Covenant promises of God<sup>14</sup>.



## MUTILATED FEET

***When He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet. [Luke 24:40]  
And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, [Ephesians 1:22]***

***I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. [Luke 10:19]***

Feet in the Scriptures often refer to victory over enemies. When nails were hammered into Jesus' feet, it signified the purchase of the power for Adam's race to trample on all the works of the Devil. There is no demonic stronghold that can stand against the blood of Christ<sup>7</sup>. The way has been opened for us to walk in boldness and confidence in our identities as sons & daughters of God.

Isaiah also spoke of 'the beautiful feet of those who bring good news'<sup>15</sup>. Jesus' blood, pouring from the wounds in His feet, meant that instead of being oppressed by the Evil One, we could be the joy-filled messengers of His amazing grace.

## RIVEN SIDE

***One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. [John 19:34]***

***I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws [Ezekiel 36:27]***

Lastly the sword plunged into Jesus' side brought forth blood and water, suggesting that thrusting upwards, from the centurion's position on the ground, it pierced the lungs and heart, the centre of human life. This was done that the prophecy of Ezekiel might be fulfilled: mankind would be made new. And out of the new man would flow new holy desires and aspirations. As God's beloved children, we are now free to embrace our unique destiny and calling.

Furthermore the blood gushing from Jesus' side was a reminder that Eve had been formed from Adam's side. The fundamental husband–wife relationship, the foundation for all community, had also been subject to a curse after their disobedience<sup>16</sup>, but through Jesus' shed blood this was now restored, along with every other reconciliation needed in human relationships<sup>17</sup>. The door was opened to true fellowship with the Father, and with one another.

And finally, the blood flowing from the heart covered every distress, every grief and every broken emotional place in the human condition. No longer do we have to be bound by the wounds of the past.

**Jesus' body was broken, so we could be whole;  
Jesus was bound so we could be free;  
Jesus died so we can live.  
Let's appropriate what He paid for.**

## **TO CLOSE:**

If your Christian tradition allows you to, consider breaking bread: Paul tells us that when we take bread and wine we actually fellowship in the body and blood of Jesus, and we declare the efficacy of His death over our lives<sup>18</sup>. Breaking bread was a normal part of everyday life for the early Christians, and is a powerful tool in the journey into freedom.

***May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father,  
give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,  
so that we may know Him better.***

***May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened in order  
that we may know the hope to which He has called us,  
the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people,  
[Ephesians 1:17-19]***



## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>John 3:8

<sup>2</sup>Leviticus 16

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 4:1-12, Hebrews 12:24

<sup>4</sup>Hebrews 2:10

<sup>5</sup>Romans 8:19

<sup>6</sup>Proverbs 18:21

<sup>7</sup>Revelation 12:11

<sup>8</sup>Philippians 2:13

<sup>9</sup>Isaiah 53:5

<sup>10</sup>Genesis 3:17-19

<sup>11</sup>2 Timothy 1:7

<sup>12</sup>1 Corinthians 2:16

<sup>13</sup>Hebrews 10:19,20

<sup>14</sup>2 Corinthians 1:20

<sup>15</sup>Isaiah 52:7

<sup>16</sup>Genesis 3:16

<sup>17</sup>Ephesians 2:14-18

<sup>18</sup>1 Corinthians 11:26

## CREDITS

Photos: Nails: Jared Davidson; Worship: John Price; Hands: Milava Vigerova

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