

“Let Me See Your Hands”

Luke 24: 13-35

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Communion Devotion

It happened more than once. As a matter of fact, it occurred fairly often. I would sit down to eat when I was a child and one of my parents would say, “Let me see your hands.” Usually I found myself going to wash my dirty hands before I could begin my meal. You would think I would have learned my lesson after two or three trips away from the table, but I am not sure little boys want to learn some things. I think I caught on, though, the evening I returned to the table and discovered that most of my french fries were gone. It seems my three brothers loved it when I had to leave the table.

“Let me see your hands.” I wonder what it was about Jesus’ hands that led to his identity? What did these disciples see when they ate with Jesus that his voice did not reveal?

You recall from the sermon a couple of weeks ago that two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a seven-mile journey. It was Sunday after the crucifixion of Jesus and these two disciples were sad and confused. As they walked, Jesus joined them on their journey and talked to them about the events of the weekend. However, they did not recognize him.

When they approached their home in Emmaus, they encouraged Jesus to spend the night with them. Still, they did not know who he was but that changed when they sat to eat the evening meal. Luke tells us what happened.

“When he was at the table with them, he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him and he disappeared from their sight” Luke 24:30-31.

What did they see that led to the awareness of Jesus’ identity? Was it the way he broke the bread and blessed it that reminded them of the way he fed the 5,000 one day? Perhaps. Do you think they saw the nail prints in his hands? Possibly. We may never know for sure exactly what opened their eyes but it had to have something to do with his hands.

“Let me see your hands.” If we looked at Jesus’ hands today, what would we see? We would see someone who had experienced pain and suffering.

I cannot look at my brother’s hands without remembering a night he suffered. Joe has a rather large scar that crosses his palm. It occurred when he fell through a window and was cut deeply by the glass. (Actually, he did not fall but was pushed through the window by another brother, but that is a story for another time.) I recall the details of that night as if it happened yesterday. I can still see the blood and all the expression of pain on his face.

I can’t look at Jesus’ hands and fail to see the pain he suffered, too. Nail prints in someone’s hands meant only one thing in that culture. It meant they had been attached to a cross to die. How horrible.

We know that is exactly what happened to Jesus, but why? I think we know the answer to that, too. He died out of love for you and me. He took our sins upon his shoulders and died to save us from our sins.

I cannot say it better than the old Gospel hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross."

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.*

*In that old rugged cross stained with blood so divine
Such a wonderful beauty I see;
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me.*

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it someday for a crown.*

Thank you, Lord, for letting us see your hands. They tell us what is in your heart and it is good.

(I borrowed the title for this sermon from Robert L. Allen. Thanks, Robert.)