

For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

THE MARKS OF THE CROSS

JOHN, 20:25 GAL. 6,17

Paul in the words of the text is closing his letter to the church in far away Galatia. It is a letter of admonition, instruction and advice in christian living. ~~It is~~ In this letter ~~that~~ he reveals his estimate of the Cross by saying that it is the only thing ~~is~~ worthy of the highest degree of human attachment.

For more than twenty years he has been out on his mission of destiny. He has had many conflicts and struggles, ~~through the years~~. From that memorable day of his first meeting with Jesus Christ he had gone out on lifes corduroy road to mark a trail across three continents with blood, sweat and tears. He had been stoned until he fell down in a torn bleeding heap, and was dumped out of the city for dead and left for the grave diggers. He had been beaten with forty stripes save one until his blood ran down like a stream. He had been thrown into prison; his hands and feet had known the biting agony of the ball and chain. At the time of this writing he was broken in body, his health was gone, he was almost blind. His hands were gnarled and twisted, his body was scarred from head to foot. He could have easily been recognised as a ^{veteran} ~~man~~ of many conflicts.

If you had asked him where and why he had those ugly scars he might have said: I received these for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. They were marks that he had received in defence of a cause which he loved more than life itself. Thus he writes in this Epistle. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

These were marks that would follow him to the grave, but there he would leave them. The crown to which he referred when he was facing Neros block would be placed upon a new head unscarred by the hands of a pagan world.

These marks and scars on Paul's ^{body} were very obvious. ~~and~~ ^{but} they were honorable scars. Scars that he was proud of but they were ~~not~~ not the ~~se~~ marks to which he is referring in the text.

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The marks on his physical body were only incidental to those deeper scars that were upon his soul. Those marks of Jesus Christ ^{inscribed} upon his character, Those marks on his corruptible body would not appear in that glorified body that would be his after the resurrection. But those indelible scars on his soul would never be erased. They were the identifying marks that would permit him an entrance into the presence of Jesus Christ. Paul was saying here: I bear in my body a likeness to Jesus Christ. His spirit was like the spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. No amount of profession, ceremonialism or ritual will identify you with Christ if you do not have his spirit abiding in you. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of love, it is long suffering and kind. It thinketh no evil. It runs counter to the spirit of this world and is a direct rebuke to greed and selfishness wherever it is found.

Paul bore in his body a like passion of Jesus.

The entire life of Jesus on earth was dominated by a passionate devotion to a cause. He was recorded as saying at times; For this cause came I into the world. To this end was I born. He was dominated by a purpose possessed by a passion for a cause. He cared not for his own interests and loved not his life unto the death. While others sat in their placidity he was out on the mountains seeking the sheep that had wandered away. While his disciples slept he was out in Gethsemane sweating blood for a lost world. While others enjoyed the comforts of life he had no place to lay his head. While others lived he was out on Calvary dying.

This was the kind of identification that Paul was referring to when he said I bear in my the marks of the Lord Jesus.

He was saying here that the marks of Jesus can be seen in my conduct. It was the same kind of likeness that was noticed in the followers of Jesus who walked the streets of Jerusalem. When the people took note that they had been with Jesus Christ. There is something about the bearing of a real Christian that reminds one of Jesus.

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This world needs a better economy, a more friendly understanding between Capitol and Labor. A saner analysis of racial problems. But the real ~~current~~ ^{today} paramount need of this old world is men and women who will carry into the streets, shops, officies and crowded thoroughfares of this land the character and likeness of Jesus Christ, in their lives. Nothing less than a practival demonstration of the character and likness of Jesus Christ in the lives of men and women will ever turn the tide of a modern world on its mad dash to perdition. God help us as christians to make that display before it is too late.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone
And all the world go free
No, there's a cross for every one
And there's a cross for me.

This consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free
And then go home my crown to wear
For there's a crown for me.

Upon the chrystal pavement down
At Jesus Pierced feet
Joyful I'll cast my golden crown
And his dear name repeat.