



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Scars and Stars of Christmas – Part 1

Guest(s): Adrian Rogers

Air Date: December 24, 2024

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello, everyone, and Merry Christmas to you all. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm so happy you joined us today on this very special day, and it's a pleasure to have a chance to bring this program to you. It's a very special broadcast of Family Talk. Our guest is going to be one of our friends, the late Pastor Adrian Rogers. How I loved that man. He was like a brother to me. He served on my board when I was president of Focus on the Family, and he had a great influence on us all. I mean, just his presence changed the character of our board. We still pray for his widow, Joyce, and their family. They're just wonderful people.

Pastor Rogers was founder and president of a radio and TV ministry called Love Worth Finding, and he was also senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. And what you're going to hear today is a sermon that he preached at Bellevue and it was later heard on Love Worth finding. This is what we call a classic program, and I know that you're going to enjoy it. And the title that Dr. Rogers put on it was "Stars and Scars of Christmas."

Adrian Rogers: This is Theology 101. Are you ready for the test? One question on the test, is Jesus God or man? All right, the answer to that question is yes, He is the God-man, God in human flesh. The Prophet Isaiah said, "Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given." When Isaiah said a child is born, he was speaking of his humanity. When he said a son is given, he was speaking of his deity. He is the God-man.

Now, as a child He was born in Bethlehem, as God He has ruled from eternity. He did not have His beginning, only His birth at Bethlehem.

The star pointed the way to where the child was in the Christmas story, but there's a darker side to Christmas, not only the stars, but the scars, because as a man He was born to die, as God He died for our sins.

Can you think of a God with scars? You see the little baby there in the manger and you see those little dimpled feet, those little dimpled feet are going to be pierced with a hideous, cruel nail. You see those little chubby hands and those pink fingers, they will one day bear scars.

Now, the time for our Scripture is this. Jesus has lived a sinless life, He has been falsely accused, He is butchered on a cruel Roman cross, He is put into a grave, and that grave sealed with a stone, yet on the third day, He rises, He comes out of that grave a living victorious savior. He has appeared to His disciples, and He has shown Himself alive. Thomas was not there when He first appeared. Eight days later, Jesus appears again, and here is the passage I'm reading. John 20:24, "But Thomas, one of the 12 called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, 'We have seen the Lord.' And he said unto them, 'Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.'"

That is I want to see, if He was crucified and risen, I want to know it's Him. The way I will know is when I see these scars in His hand and in His side. "And after eight days, again, His disciples were within and Thomas with them, then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Then saith He to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side and be not faithless, but believing.' And Thomas answered, and said unto him," I love this part, "'My Lord and my God.' Jesus saith unto him, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.'" And there, ladies and gentlemen, He's talking about you and me. Blessed are they who have not seen what Thomas saw, but have believed.

Now, Thomas saw the scars and he said, "My Lord and my God." Think of it, a God with scars. Now, I want you to consider with me the scars of the Lord Jesus. They're not incidental, they are so fundamental that Jesus carried those scars with Him to Heaven. Did you know that the only man-made thing in Heaven are the scars of Jesus Christ? Jesus visited earth, and when he went back to Heaven, He took some souvenirs of his visit with him. Those souvenirs are the scars in His hands and the scar in His side. He has kept those scars as a lasting memorial of His humanity through all eternity.

When Jesus comes again, one of the ways that we will know that it is the dear Savior of the many ways are the blessed scars. Put in your margin, Zechariah 13:6, "And one shall say unto him, 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' And he shall answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'" When He comes again, when He comes again, He will bear those blessed scars.

So I want us to think about the stars and the scars of Christmas, and the three things as we think about God in human flesh that I want you to learn about the scars of the Lord Jesus Christ. Number one, the scars tell us that as a man, Jesus suffered. Now, it's very important that you understand this, that as a man, Jesus suffered.

In John 20:17, Jesus invited Thomas to examine those scars. They were brute testimony to the fact that Jesus indeed was pierced with those hideous nails. There's a great problem in the world today when you try to testify about God.

The problem is not primarily science, the problem is primarily history, the problem is primarily suffering, and people will ask you again and again, how can you believe in a God, if there be a God, who allows so much suffering? And this causes great doubt because here's the way the human mind works. Well, if God is love and God is all powerful, why does God allow so much suffering? And so they think, well, perhaps He is a God of infinite love, but He has no power. Therefore, He is a weak God, or else He is all powerful, but He has no love, and so He is a cruel God, or perhaps He has no power and no love, so He is no God at all. That's the way people think.

There's a greater question, not why do men suffer? Here's the great question, why does God suffer? Now, you want to question, and the question is not why do we as humans suffer, but those scars tell us that God in human flesh suffered.

Isaiah 53:3, speaking of Jesus, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Now, I remind you, He was God in human flesh and He suffered.

Again, the Bible says in Isaiah 63:9, "In all their affliction," talking about us, "He was afflicted." And not only did He suffer when He was here, but I have some information for you, God still suffers. God in His glory suffers. You say, how could God suffer? Well, let me give you a verse. Ephesians 4:30, the Bible says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." Have you ever been grieved? Grief is a form of emotional suffering. God in Heaven still suffers. God grieves.

Now, you can understand this. Does a father suffer when he has a wayward son? That's what the story of the prodigal son is all about, that God the Father suffers because He has children away from him. Grieve is a love word. You can only grieve somebody who loves you. Your lawnmower may vex you, your children will grieve you, amen, because you love them.

By the way, that verse in Ephesians 4:30 is a great verse to teach the personality of the Holy Spirit. Our Jehovah's Witnesses tell us that the Holy Spirit is not a person, He is just an influence from God. Well, you can't grieve an influence. Only a person can be grieved, and the only person who can be grieved is someone who loves you. Grieve is a love word. God still suffers.

I want to ask you a question. Does the head suffer when the body feels pain? Of course it does. Christ is the head of the church. We're His body. When you suffer, Lord suffers, He's touched with the feeling of your infirmity. When Saul was persecuting the church, Jesus appeared to Saul and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He could have said, "Well, I'm not persecuting you. I'm persecuting these Christians." But friend, when a Christian is persecuted, Jesus is persecuted. When the body hurts, the head hurts. We are the bride, Jesus is the groom. If the bride is unfaithful to the groom, would not the groom grieve? When the church is unfaithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, is not His heart broken?

Jesus suffers as a man, He suffered. The scars tell us, the scars tell us that God has suffered.

Now, here's a big question. Why? Why would God Almighty who could do anything, whatever He wants, whenever He wants, why would He choose to suffer? Second point, not only do the scars of Jesus tell us that as a man he suffered, but the scars of Jesus tell us that as a man, Jesus sympathizes, that Jesus understands. Nobody really knows the hurt, nobody really knows the pain in the human heart except Jesus, but Jesus really does suffer.

When we go off on a trip somewhere, Joyce will pick up some trinkets somewhere, and trinkets is mostly what they are. They're souvenirs. Why do we buy souvenirs when we go somewhere? Well, they're sort of a reminder I've been there, I have been there. Jesus, when He went to Heaven, brought with him to heaven some souvenirs from Earth, and those souvenirs are the scars that remain in His hands. And what do those souvenirs from Earth tell us? That He has been there, He has felt, and He understands our pain.

Put down now Hebrews 2:17-18, "Wherefore in all things, it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren." To him is Jesus, the brethren, that's us, "He's made like us that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, for in that He himself hath suffered," underscore that, "he himself hath suffered being tempted," that means being tested. He is able to succor, S-U-C-C-O-R, which means to help them that are tempted. Jesus said, "When you suffer, I suffer, and not only do I suffer, but because I suffer, I understand."

Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tested like as we are, yet without sin." He's touched, He knows, He cares, He feels, He understands, and He loves.

Dr. Paul Brand was a missionary, a great surgeon who spent a lot of time ministering to lepers in leper colonies. And Dr. Brand talked about the horrible sin of leprosy. And he said one of the debilitating sins of leprosy is that it removes the ability of the human body to feel pain. And then here's what Dr. Paul Brand said, and I copied it down for you. Listen to what this great doctor said. He said, "If I had the power to eliminate pain, I would not exercise that right. Pain's value is too great." Notice, pain's value. "Rather, I would lend all of my energies in doing all that I can to help when the pain turns to suffering."

I want to tell you something, our Lord suffered and our Lord sympathizes, and the pain that He allows us to have is really proof of His love, the pain that He allows us to have is proof of His love. After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God said, "Cursed is the ground," now listen to this, "for your sake." He didn't say for your punishment, but for your welfare, for your sake, thorns and thistles, would it bring forth to you? God put a curse on the environment in which we live because the worst thing could happen to us would be for us to

have the sickness, the infection of sin, and to feel no pain. There is the protecting purpose of pain. When you and I walk, we stand on one foot, then on another. When we sit, we shift our weight around, but a leper doesn't do that.

Dr. Brand said that a leper, it doesn't limp when his leg is hurt because he feels no pain, so he walks on the wound. Injured legs never get any rest. When you turn your ankle, if your body is healthy, the nerves immediately order your body to take the weight off of that ankle. It happens so fast, it'll happen just like that.

I was walking down a mountainside with my bride, Joyce. It was a beautiful day, a beautiful mountain, and suddenly Joyce was on the ground just like that. What had happened, Joyce had turned her ankle, and when she turned her ankle, the nerves in her body caused this muscle to relax, and she went down just like that. Now, the reason for that was to protect her leg, that she would not walk on that twisted and stretched tendon. Thankfully that before long she was feeling good again and could walk.

Pain has a protecting purpose. Thank God for pain, it tells us something is wrong. Pain has a unifying purpose. It is pain that draws us together. Your whole body comes to the aid of a suffering member. You ever hit your thumb with a hammer and when putting up a picture for your wife on the wall? I'm talking about one of those that turns the thumb black. I know what you did, you grabbed it with this hand. The second thing you did, you stuck it in your mouth and sucked on it. The third thing you did is a little dance. Now, why did you do that? What do your knees have to do with your thumb? I don't know, but you've got to do that dance.

Friend, pain has a unifying factor. Do you know what unifies a church? Suffering. Do you know what brings people together? Suffering. The Bible says, "When one member suffers, all members suffer with it." Dr. Brand said, "I can tell the health of a human body by its reaction to pain. If it doesn't react to pain, there is something wrong." You can tell the health of a church by its reaction to pain. How much does the church care for the homeless, the sick, those with broken hearts and broken hopes and broken homes? A church is unified by pain. Pain has a protecting purpose, pain has a unifying purpose, and pain has a correcting purpose.

Dr. Brand said that the lepers who would smoke cigarettes sometimes would smoke the cigarette right on down until the fire in the cigarette would burn their fingers, and they'd continue to smoke and burn the flesh because they could feel no pain. God allows pain to protect us, and if it weren't for the pain, we would never know that we're being hurt.

You put your hand on a hot stove, and there's a message that goes immediately to your brain and says, "It's hot down here," and the brain says, "Well, move," and it moves just like that. Now, you don't realize you're doing all that thinking, but you're doing that because that pain says that you need to protect yourself.

Pain comes in all kinds of forms. There's physical pain, there is emotional pain, there is spiritual pain, and Americans want to kill pain at any cost. That's the reason we have so many sedatives. That's the reason kids get on drugs, to kill the pain. That's the reason some adults are on drugs, to kill the pain. Now, there is a legitimate use of medicine, but many are trying to dull their sensibilities. They don't get along with the parents, and they turn to drugs. And I want to tell you, when kids get on drugs, they really don't care what their parents think. They are in another world. Some turn to alcohol, and it's kind of pathetic to see adults addicted to alcohol criticizing young people addicted to drugs.

Why do people turn to alcohol? So many times to kill the pain. A man's drunk, and he says, "I'm feeling no pain." He says, "I'm going to drown my troubles." Well, his troubles can swim. The Japanese have a proverb, first, the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, and then the drink takes the man. Why do we do this? Why do people have an affair? Why do they commit adultery? Many times trying to kill the pain of insecurity and loneliness.

One of the biggest sedatives that we have today is television. People watch television because they can't face themselves, and they live in a make-believe world. The problem is that many people take a sedative when they need a savior. The pain is to tell us that something is wrong.

Now, Jesus gives us peace and joy, not primarily to remove the pain, that'll be done at the rapture, but to help us to endure the pain.

Now, when we see scars in the hands of Bethlehem's babe, they are a testimony to His humanity, a God with scars. They tell us as God He suffered, as man He suffered, as God He sympathizes, as man He sympathizes, He knows how we feel, He understands. And Jesus will hear the cries of a blind beggar before He hears the cries of a proud Pharisee.

Now, here's the third thing, not only do the scars of Jesus tell us that as a man Jesus suffered, and not only do they tell us that as a man Jesus sympathizes, but the scars of Jesus tell us as a man Jesus saves. That is so important that you understand this. Why was He nailed to that hellish cross? Why did He step out of glory? Why did He allow himself to be pierced? Why were those nails put into His quivering hands and to those precious feet? Why? Well, the Bible says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin."

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a powerful image of Christ's sacrifice today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We've been listening to a special presentation recorded several years ago by the late Pastor Adrian Rogers called "The Stars and Scars of Christmas." Now, we'll hear part two of this presentation coming up tomorrow on Christmas Day, but if you'd like to learn more about the legacy that's carrying Pastor Rogers' ministry forward, we've got a link at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk where you can learn more about the ministry of Dr. Adrian Rogers, and Love Worth Finding is the name of the ministry.

In addition, if you'd like to hear this program again in its entirety, maybe share it with a friend, you can do so at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. You can also access all of our programming when you use the Family Talk app. So regardless of how you hear the broadcast, make sure that you hear and spend some time meditating over the stars and scars of Christmas and these powerful words of exhortation and comfort from Pastor Adrian Rogers.

Your partnership means everything to us here at Family Talk. We're a listener-supported broadcast ministry. We rely on friends like you to help us continue broadcasting biblical truth to families just like yours each and every day. As a matter of fact, all throughout this Christmas holiday, we've been receiving messages from listeners about how Family Talk has touched their lives, has strengthened their marriages, and has helped them become better parents. And your prayers and faithful financial support make these life-changing moments possible.

Of course, you can always give a gift online at drjamesdobson.org. You can also call us at 877-732-6825, or you can send us a letter through the mail. Send us a Christmas card. It's not too late for that. Write to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Post Office Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Or if it's easier, just put JDFI for short, P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh wishing you and your family a wonderful Christmas Eve and looking ahead to a joyous Christmas Day celebration. Be sure to join us again next time for part two of a very moving message from Pastor Adrian Rogers taking a look at the stars and scars of Christmas. That's coming up here next time right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. From our family to yours, Merry Christmas.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.