

# The Story Scars Tell

Luke 24:36-49

April 21, 2024

**You may have noticed that the first sentence of our passage says, “While they were talking about this...”** and wondered what were they talking about? Cleophas and the other disciple that Jesus appeared to on the **Emmaus Road were telling the disciples** about that experience. Suddenly, Jesus appears to all of the disciples and scares the jeepers out of them. To prove that he was not a ghost but flesh and bone he tells them to look and touch his scars.

**Those scars represented Jesus’ earthly hardships;** they represented his experiences with brutality, hatred, betrayal, lies and deceit. The scars that marked his body told the story of how speaking and acting in truth, **love; grace and mercy in a political** and religious culture of domination, oppression, and tyranny could lead to torture and death. Yes, Jesus carried the scars of his earthly wounds and it was by these scars his disciples would recognize him after his resurrection.

**Kyiara was 18 and had been having symptoms** for several months but the doctors couldn’t get to the bottom of what was going on. Then when they diagnosed that she had an infection that had settled into her heart and was affecting her whole body, her condition was critical.

**On the night that she would have been** at her senior prom she had open-heart surgery. Fortunately, the surgery went better than expected and the surgeons were able to save her heart valve. But she had a long, unsightly scar down her sternum.

**At first Kyiara was angry and resented** her scar and everything it represented. But over time she realized that her scar was beautiful, something to be celebrated. Kyiara says, “My scar is my daily reminder that life is short. It is a part of my story and reminds me of my family, of my boyfriend, and it means I get to keep being a part of their stories.”

**We all have scars; some are physical** from injuries and surgeries. Some of us have emotional scars due to anxiety and doubt, of fears and of failures that have taken their toll in our life. **These emotional scars may be due** to abuse from unhealthy, toxic relationships with family members, spouses, and friends, others who took advantage during vulnerable times in our lives.

**These emotional scars may leave their** visible signs, as well. Mental health issues that result in unresolved feelings, unvented hostilities, and unspoken truths that cause angry outbursts, trouble retaining employment and compulsive disorders. Ulcers and other illnesses betray emotional scars that have never healed.

**There are social scars of relationships that were broken,** of friendships that never became as close as we hoped. Social scars can even develop in communities of faith. **Scars are left after friendships are broken** when there are differences of opinion over congregational issues. Scars that keep some separated from others simply because they were "on the other side" of the issue.

**Maybe you have heard me say,** “The best times and the worst times in my life have happened in the church.” I carry scar tissue in my heart and mind due to some very painful experiences and unfortunately, so does my family.

**Thankfully, like Kyiara and in my experience** we do not have to be defined by our scars. Our scars do not have to be harsh, ugly reminders of our past, our time of weakness, or abuse at the hands of others.

**Kenzie, is a young woman who had become** so numb to life due to abuse and struggle that the only way she could feel anything was to cause herself physical pain by cutting herself. She says, “My scars tell a story. **Each one represents a journey**, an emotion, a torment attached. Each one is a piece of my life, a piece of me. Some people think of scars as memories they want erased, events they wish hadn’t occurred. I wouldn’t go as far as to say that I am proud of them. Yet there is an element of **pride knowing I am conquering the battle of self-injury**. This journey I have been on has shaped every bit of who I am. That journey included the pain and suffering that led to each one of the scars. Don’t look at my scars with pity. Be proud I am standing in front of you today.”

Jesus comes to these disciples and wants them to see and touch his scars. **He does this in a way that shows them the possibility for healing**. Jesus explains to them the purpose of his scars: They are God’s means of making imperfect people whole and God’s means of making divided people one.

**Kintsugi, or golden joinery**, is the Japanese art of repairing broken ceramic plates, cups, figurines and vases. Instead of concealing the cracks as done in a traditional restoration, gold or silver lacquer paint is applied **during the repair process to bring out**, to highlight the flaws. The practice is often associated with the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, which focuses on the beauty of imperfections, flaws in the object. **It is in the highlighting of the imperfections** and flaws that makes the object not just more beautiful, but more valuable.

**So often we think of our world** and the people in it, including ourselves as broken. No, we are not broken we are imperfect. Actually we are **perfectly imperfect and the scars in our lives** the visible and hidden, physical, emotional, social and all the others are signs of healing. This perfect imperfection makes us beautiful and more valuable.

**Because we have scars and we are healed** or in the process of healing we are also offered an opportunity. Jesus was preparing the disciples for the next season of their mission and ministry after his ascension. He was **getting these perfectly imperfect people** ready to go out embrace and engage an equally perfectly imperfect world. They had work to do; they had purpose, meaning and significance.

**My divorce, the loss of family, home, friends** and occupation left me a deeply wounded person. I stumbled and staggered through life for a few months, I felt like I was such a failure and disappointment. I was having a hard time coping. **Eventually, I got involved in a support group** in a local church and joined a group of people in various stages of woundedness and healing. The leader of the group was a minister I knew and after **about 8 months he asked me** to come by his office. He told me that he didn’t think God wasn’t done with me and that I was a person of significance. Then he said words I have never forgotten. “Chris,” he said, **“you are going to come through this scarred,** healing can be just as painful as the wound. But you are going to be left with a scar on your life that is going to make you more sensitive and aware of the wounds and scars of others. **Don’t be afraid to show your scars** because when others see that you have been wounded and the scars of healing in your life it will offer them hope. They see that they too can heal.”

**Look nobody wants to get wounded and receive scars.** But the truth is no one gets out of this life without being wounded and getting scars. We all have scars. **It is in our woundedness and in the scars** of healing that we have a significant and unique opportunity to offer support and hope to others in their woundedness and healing.

**God loves us in our woundedness and with our scars. That makes us people of purpose, meaning** and significance. Once we deeply trust the fact that we are loved the way we are, that we are precious in God’s eyes, we are able to recognize the preciousness of others and their unique place in God’s heart. It is when we trust God and accept our perfect imperfection and that of others

that we can use our unique experiences to be a great blessing to others. Don't be afraid to tell the story of your scars. Amen