



O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

The torture and death of Christ Jesus represents far more than just a lifeline to heaven. No, at the cross we see also His glory, we see Christ exalted!

THERE LIES WITHIN the regenerated heart the capacity to see both ugly obscenity and glorious beauty in the same scene. For the believer, the visual obscenity of Golgotha both repels and attracts; it both sickens and revives.

That which is so horrible, so painful, that we must force ourselves to look, is the very place we are to go whenever we must reestablish our footing, our perspective. Living in this world blunts the spiritual senses, its siren song weans us from the hard and fast truth of God in Christ, and it makes a concerted effort to reverse the polarity of our spiritual compass. So we return to the cross to get our proper bearings.

As painful as it is, we return and stand before that “old rugged cross,” reminding ourselves of everything the world wants us to forget: that the Son of God sacrificed Himself in a horrible, bloody, very real way to make Himself the once and final atonement for our sins.

But we cannot remain on our feet for long before the twisted and hideous visage of our Lord. The bloody remembrance soon drives us to our knees in holy gratitude and reverence.

*O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,*

*Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred Head, what glory,
What bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.*

As painful and convicting that scene,
we still embrace it, for therein lies our
salvation.

For you have been called for this
purpose, since Christ also suffered for
you, leaving you an example for you
to follow in His steps, who committed
no sin, nor was any deceit found in
his mouth; and while being reviled,
He did not revile in return; while
suffering, He uttered no threats, but
kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who
judges righteously; and He Himself
bore our sins in His body on the cross,
so that we might die to sin and live to
righteousness; for by His wounds you
were healed.

1 Peter 2:21-24

But far more. The torture and death
of Christ Jesus represents far more than
just a lifeline to heaven. Were that all we
find there, we would still grab hold for
security, yet turn away from the horror
in disgust.

No, at the cross—and here is what
chafes the unbeliever—we see also His
glory, we see Christ exalted!

For the word of the cross is
foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the
power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18

We are not blind to His suffering, but
we understand the love behind it. And,
knowing that Christ hung there in our
place—it was for *our* sins He died, not
His—then rose on the third day, He
becomes for every believer not a pitiable
martyr but a victorious Lord, a King.

Thus for the believer His ugly, hideous
wounds are transformed into crowns of
glory.

*What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,
Was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.*

And after twisting together a crown of
thorns, they put it on His head, and a
reed in His right hand; and they knelt
down before Him and mocked Him,
saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Matthew 27:29

The soldiers bowed down to Jesus to
mock Him, to shame Him, to heap
upon Him the agonizing hatred of his
children, His own creation. With evil
satisfaction they spat upon the one
about to die for them.

But we bow down to Jesus to adore
Him, to worship Him as both Savior
and God. We bow down to Him to
acknowledge His Lordship over our
lives—the very lives He purchased in
His agony and death.

We bow down to be near Him, and to
let the world know that we are now and
forever bound to Him as our King.

*What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever;
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to Thee.*

Bernard of Clairvaux



Then I looked, and I heard
the voice of many angels
around the throne and the
living creatures and the
elders; and the number
of them was myriads of
myriads, and thousands
of thousands, saying with
a loud voice, "Worthy is
the Lamb that was slain
to receive power and
riches and wisdom and
might and honor and glory
and blessing." And every
created thing which is in
heaven and on the earth
and under the earth and
on the sea, and all things
in them, I heard saying,
"To Him who sits on the
throne, and to the Lamb,
be blessing and honor
and glory and dominion
forever and ever." And
the four living creatures
kept saying, "Amen." And
the elders fell down and
worshiped.

Revelation 5:11-14

