



*O Sacred Head,
Now Wounded*

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see also His glory, we see
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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