

‘He Chose to Forgive Us’

Take a **look at your hands**. Lucky to still have all of your digits? Probably, this isn't a farming community. I'm use to 8 being a pretty good number. Look – nice hands? Wrinkled? Spotted? Lines? Look at your neighbors' hands. Crooked? Friendly – reaching? Young. Old. Scripture talks about the *Hand of God* – **122 times** to be exact. God's right hand symbolizes honor, power, and authority to subdue enemies. Our hands are wonderful, **God's are mighty**.

The words that Caitlin read from Psalm 118 were, “The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!” Jesus Christ being at God's right hand means that the Messiah, the Lord, is of equal position, honor, power and authority with God.

Jesus' hands were also significant. He **healed, he touched, he loved** ... his hands were nailed scared. The crowd at the cross, knew that the purpose of the pounding of the nails – the sound that you just heard, was to **hold Jesus' hands to the cross**. And Jesus allowed it because he knew that between his hands and the wood of the cross – there was a list.

The list that our **lives made**.

A list of our **faults...and our broken places**.

A **list of our sins**.

We have people watching our lives, all the time. The world is **keeping track** of our broken places and it is **human nature to want to share it**. (hashtag) **#guesswhatshedidnow?**

God makes a list also.

He sees.

He knows.

The difference is that **he doesn't share it** – it is **never seen again**. He has literally **wiped out the written evidence** of all of our **broken places which we use to carry around like a sign over our heads**. “He destroyed the record of the debt we owed.” Gone. Nailed under Jesus' hands ... covered by the cross.

If we close our eyes we can **still hear the hammer** and imagine the soldiers...the ones that are keeping track. Remember the story of **Pilate and Herod**. What kind of trials were those? **Illegal**. I would love to pin this cross nightmare on them. But **Jesus chose the nails**. He opened his hands willingly. He could see what we

couldn't – that the **nail was mean to cover up** what was written about us. Paul in Colossians uses great word pictures – like all good teachers do: **“having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us.”** Jesus blotted out our sentence. **He chose the nails.**

He knew that our sins would be between his hands and the cross.

Nails fix broken things.

What difference does Jesus make? He hid our sins and then covered them in his blood. Those hands were open for all. I challenged you last week to **remember Jesus' sacrifice of love** – and **go and do the same**.

Go and **sacrifice**.

Go and **love**.

Go and **be kind**.

Remember that **Jesus died for all**: men and women, gay and straight, the transgendered, the Hispanic, the awkward kid, the homeless mom, the 13 year old wondering why he is here. Did you reach out this week?

Did you **show a portion** of that love

in **your realm of influence**

in the **name of Jesus** ?

Because that is what makes the **church distinct from the rest of the world**. ...**remembering** the life, the nails, and the name of Jesus.

Our purpose as Christians is to tell others the Good News. To be a **sign to the world that Jesus makes a difference**. But how? What is the language of someone I don't know or can't relate to? **What sign can they read?**

IESUS NAZARENVS REX IVDAEORVM (John) INRI (first letters) Latin (26 letters)

Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews

OUTOS ESTIN O BASILEUS TWN IOUDAIWN (Luke) Greek (30 letters)

This is the King of the Jews

THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Mark) Hebrew (19 letters)

The King of the Jews

There is a sign above the cross this morning. On this sign...similar to the original sign above Jesus, there are **three languages**. It was the custom of the Romans to use **gypsum letter written on a rough board** attached to a cross to tell the reason why a person was being executed. Three languages on a board was unusual.

Probably, the Roman governor, **Pilate, dictated the title in Latin** (symbol of power, government), the **centurion in charge of the execution** carried out the edict and its translation into Greek (the international language

of culture – wisdom, art, commerce) and Hebrew (religious language of the Jews – law of God).

So, **King of the Jews** was the sign. It was meant to make the **public laugh and mock** at the Jews and Jesus.

King...sure he was.

From Nazarus, a despised Galilean ...

A King. Yes.

So the sign – had the Latin on the top, then Greek and Hebrew. Who cares? **Except it wasn't the norm.** Could it be that God was making sure that no one was left out of knowing the truth: Jesus was King of the Jews. There is **no language that God will not speak** – that is what the book, “He Chose the Nails” says and that is what the sign above the crucified Jesus said.

So this week when you are out in the world...**being kind.** What **language will you use?** We tend to think we should use words:

Quote scripture.

Lecture on morality – and how your behavior fits into the 10 commandments.

Do you give folks books to read...more words?

Or do you try to **think of other ways to speak someone's language?**

Form a relationship. ... get to know someone.

Spend time hearing their story.

Listening with out judgment.

Walking alongside.

How did God speak to you? Can you remember back? I am not sure what language used – that you could hear – but **I know that He chose the nails for you.** Remember and be thankful

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen