

October 26, 2025

Return: The One Whom They Pierced

Zechariah 12:10-13:1

Vernon Advent Christian Church

Introduction...When was the last time you wept? And why did you weep? Were you weeping because of a situation you found yourself in? Were you weeping because of something that someone else did to you? Maybe it was weeping over the loss of a loved one. I know this is true for a number of you here today. There are a number of different reasons that may bring us to the point of tears.

But, when was the last time you wept over your own sin? By that, I don't mean, when was the last time you've cried over the consequences of your sin? But when was the last time you've wept over the reality that you've sinned against a holy God?

Today's passage reminds us of the wounding power of the cross. Before the blood of Jesus restores us, first, it wounds us. Before the blood of Jesus cleanses us, it reveals our filth. In other words, conviction comes before cleansing.

Like many verses in Zechariah, as we have seen as we've made our way through, there are aspects to this passage that point ahead to something that has not yet happened, that are even still in our future. But, there are also aspects in this passage that describe events that have already happened from our point of view, in our history, but were still a promise of a hope to come for Zechariah's original audience. If you are able, please stand as I read the word of God this morning. [Read passage]

In these verses, we see the LORD pour out his Spirit upon his people, causing those who pierced the LORD to look upon him and mourn their sinful actions. Scholars are divided over when exactly this pouring out either took place, or when it will take place, in the history of the church.

Some scholars connect these verses to the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, [our NT Passage] Peter preached the gospel, and thousands of Jews believed and were saved. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter preached, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." They were cut to the heart and repented from their sin.

Others connect this to a future revival of the nation Israel. In Romans 11, we see Paul describing a partial hardening that has come upon Israel so that the gospel could go forth into the world allowing the Gentiles to be grafted into God's holy nation. It is believed that this "partial hardening" will one day be lifted, that the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out, allowing all of Israel to see the truth of the gospel, mourn the offense of the cross, and believe and trust in the Lord Jesus.

Still some connect these verses even further out described in the events of the second coming of Christ when we read in Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth

will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen." So, in this view, these verses allude to a future encounter at the end of time.

All three views hold a strong biblical argument. Personally, and this may be a cop out, but I think there's more nuance here, and that these verses describe what has taken place, and what is and what will take place, throughout redemptive history following the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in Acts. They're describing something that has happened, is happening, and will happen one day. In any case, at the end of the day, this passage paints a clear picture of true repentance, not focusing the when, per se, but the what. And the what is what happens when one humbles themselves before the LORD.

The first thing we see here is the LORD pouring out a spirit upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now, look at how his Spirit is described, "a spirit of grace and pleas of mercy." The word "grace" means God's undeserved favor placed, as a gift, upon one's life. "Pleas of mercy" implies calls of repentance, regret, or remorse. It's the physical action of seeking compassion from someone you've offended. So, what we find here is the Holy Spirit graciously brings conviction that leads to restoration of relationship. That God offers grace to those who plead for mercy, leading to a renewed relationship with himself. But you can only plea for mercy if you realize that you have caused an offense. And you can only realize that you have caused an offense if it is revealed to you by the Holy Spirit that has been poured out which is, in itself, an act of grace. Which leads us to our next point. Why will God's people begin to plead for mercy?

First, we see that they can not plead for mercy until God acts or does something, namely, here, pours out His Spirit. But also, why does he do so? What offense have they committed that will cause them to mourn and cry out for mercy? They will cry out at the reality that they have pierced the LORD, vs. 10, "When they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him..."

I want us to spend a brief moment unpacking what we find here in this verse. The term pierced depicts a fatal stabbing, a piercing that leads to death. So, the LORD, through Zechariah, is saying that his people will soon fatally wound God. Because of their hard hearts, they will pierce their Creator. The one who stretched the heavens is the one who will be pierced as we see Him described at the beginning of ch. 12 in verse 1.

Fast forward to the gospels, particularly the gospel of John, and we see a connection made between these words in Zechariah and Jesus. After Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross and gave up his spirit, John writes, "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water...For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'They will look on him whom they have pierced.'" (John 19:37)

So, Zechariah prophesied that the house of David would pierce the LORD, and John, then, connected the dots from Zechariah's prophecy to Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus is the LORD who was fatally pierced by the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Do not miss this. It is the one who stretched out the heavens that they nailed to the cross. It is the creator of the earth that they have pierced. It is the one who formed the spirit of man who was crushed by the hands of men.

The Bible is unmistakably clear: Jesus is God incarnate, God himself, in flesh. The creator of all things entered into his creation and dwelt among us in the person of His Son

Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The one who holds everything together at this very moment in time, willingly went to the cross to be pierced and crushed by men. The one who Zechariah spoke on behalf of is the one who was nailed to the cross and who John the Baptist spoke of as he pointed to Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River and said "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

So, here the LORD is saying that when His Spirit is poured out on their land, their eyes will be opened, and they will plead for mercy because they rejected the LORD of all. They will mourn their rejection of the good shepherd. They will lament that, instead of crowning him as Lord, they mockingly pierced him as a fool. Their eyes will fill with tears when they truly understand what took place on the cross.

The word for mourn here is one of deep pain and grief. It often describes the action that flows from losing a loved one. It's the same word used to describe Abraham's weeping when his wife, Sarah, died in Gen. 23:2. So, Israel will deeply mourn the death of Jesus.

But they won't mourn the death of Jesus as one mourns the death of a distant relative or even the death of a spouse. We see that they will mourn his death like a parent mourns the death of an only child. The text says, they will "weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first born." What profound imagery here. The pain and remorse they will feel from crucifying Jesus will parallel the pain one feels from losing a child.

Not only that, but they will also mourn him like a nation mourns the sacrificial death of a good king, as the text reads it will be "as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo." Now, what in the world is going on here?

It is believed that this refers to the location of King Josiah's death around 609 BC. Some of you might remember Josiah from the Bible and the history of Israel. He was only a young child when he became king but he was one of the few good kings who feared the LORD, and specifically, he led the people to repent, destroying the altars and high places that were set up for idol worship throughout the kingdom, and he oversaw a renewal of the covenant with God. His actions were so significant that they were seen as unparalleled in their wholehearted commitment to God's law.

But in 2 Chronicles 35:22-25, we see that Josiah is wounded in battle on the plain of Megiddo. He then is taken back to Jerusalem, where he later dies. After his burial, all of Judah and Jerusalem lamented and mourned his death, which became an ongoing tradition in Israel. So, we see in this imagery Zechariah is trying to portray, just like we see God's people grieving over the death of their good king, likewise, in the same way, they will mourn the death of this "one whom they have pierced," God's appointed good king and Messiah.

But they won't just mourn the death of their king collectively, they will mourn him individually and personally. Look at vs. 12 and following: "The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves and so on and so forth.

On the one hand, we see here all of the royal families mourning their involvement in the crime before them. But, on a deeper level, this reminds us that no individual is off the hook regarding the offense of the cross. Each family, each person, will experience tremendous pain over the crucifixion of Jesus. Whether you held the nail or not when he was pierced to the cross, swung the whip or not whenever he was beaten and flogged, or drove the spear into his side, every one stands guilty and condemned.

Now, let's internalize this for a moment. What does this passage have to do with us? We're not the nation of Israel, and this is clearly talking about Israel, so what does it have to do with you and me? It's this, we are guilty of sinning against a holy God. The Bible says that "there is no one righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10) and that "we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Therefore, we all took part in reason why Jesus died on the cross. We're all guilty. So how do we apply what we just read this morning.

Well, the first thing I want us to see is that conviction of sin is a gift from the LORD and a work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings to light the magnitude of the cross. When the Spirit is poured out, the scales fall off the eyes of God's people. Under the light of the Holy Spirit, they can see the full scope of their rebellion against God. We can only come to Christ if God, through the pouring out of His Spirit first draws us and once in Christ it is the Holy Spirit indwelling in our lives that continually convicts us of sin, in order that, we will repent and return to the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, conviction of sin is a good thing. If you desire to walk in righteousness and in obedience to God, expect the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin. Yes, it is true that God calls us just the way we are, but He loves us way too much to leave us there. It is through the Holy Spirit that conviction takes place and prompts us to make changes in our lives that make us more like Jesus.

Conviction may be painful, and it may lead to tears. But, it's on the other side of conviction that we find cleansing. Conviction of sin is a gift from the LORD and a work of the Spirit. It is a necessary element of the Christian life.

The second thing I want us to see is that sin is first an offense against God. God's people won't simply mourn because they got caught in sin. No, ultimately, they will mourn their involvement in the cross. They will mourn the fact that they pierced their LORD. There's a great hymn we sing entitled, "How Great the Father's Love for Us," and in it we find these lyrics, "It was my sin that held him there, until it was accomplished. His death breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished."

David, in Psalm 51, demonstrates this well. In this Psalm, we find David mourning his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and then his hand in the murder of her husband, Uriah, trying and cover up his sin. He says, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." And here it is, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..."

Now, our sin undoubtedly has a profound impact on others. To believe that our sin doesn't hurt anyone else is one of the great lies from the enemy. And all sin against our neighbor requires repentance and restoration. That is all true. But sin is not primarily an offense against your neighbor. Sin is, primarily, a direct offense against God himself. Against him, and him only, have we sinned and done what is evil in his sight. When it comes to the cross, you are not an innocent bystander. It is your sin, and my sin, that Christ was pierced for.

Third, I want us to see that conviction should lead us into mourning. Those who understand the magnitude of their sin against God will fall on their face before God and weep. Salvation doesn't come to those who are strong in their own strength. Salvation

comes to those who are weak. Jesus once said of himself, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17)

Some of you today need to stop trying harder to fix the mess you're in and fall on your face and weep. You can not do it in your own strength. And when we come to that place, here's the beauty of the gospel. Those who mourn their sin that led to the cross will experience the cleansing work of the cross. The cross turns our mourning into laughter and our tears into joy. Look at Zechariah 13:1, "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness."

So, on the other side of weeping is cleansing. Those who mourn will soon rejoice. Those who are sick will soon be healed. Those who are broken will soon be made whole. Those who are humbled will soon be exalted.

"It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished." Until way was accomplished? Jesus' redemptive mission to die and pay the penalty for sin. "His dying breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished." Jesus accomplished his mission and to those who put their faith and trust in Jesus' substitutionary work on the cross will have eternal life. If you have never received the Jesus as your Lord and Savior or would like to learn more about what that means, I would love to sit down and have a conversation with you. Let's pray.

Benediction: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Amen. 2 Cor. 13:14