One, Two, Three, Four

Read: Ephesians 2:1-3

Text: Psalm 22:16 “…the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”

**Introduction:** I confess that the idea for this sermon came from the sign in front of a church in Morgantown. It took only a few seconds to read that sign so I added a few things to what I read. We have read all around the story of the crucifixion during the past several weeks so I will save a little time by not re-reading that part of the basis for this message.

**1 Cross:** I just preached a sermon on the three crosses so why am I now saying: “One Cross?” It is because salvation comes from only one cross. When David describes the death of Christ in the 22nd Psalm, it is hundreds of years before crucifixion was invented as a method of capital punishment. To the Hebrews it is a prophecy that makes no sense. They disposed of their crim-inals by stoning. In the mind of the ordinary priest or Levite they could not fathom the idea that they would have any part in the murder of their Messiah. Therefore they totally miss the implications of this prophecy until after it has already occurred.

In Acts 4:12 we read: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Only 1 Cross has the effect of salvation!

**2 Hammers:** There were two primary groups of people who actually made sure that the death of Christ would happen. The first is the group who cried out: “…His blood *be* on us, and on our children.” They were the Jewish leaders who hated Christ. Without the Jewish leaders the crucifixion never would have occurred. Then there were the Romans. I call them the indif-ferent unbelievers. They had no axe to grind against Jesus. His death was just a job to them. With the one exception of the centurion who proclaimed: “Truly this was the Son of God.” there is no historical record of how they felt either before or after the death of Christ. This group reminds me of those in society who are indifferent to Jesus and who He is. They live their lives in oblivion to eternal things. They are not sure of eternity and remain unconcerned right up until death. Good Works are their hope but they will die as lost as those who hate Christ. Jesus would not have needed to die on the cross if good works would save even one person.

**3 Nails:** There were three spikes that were used in crucifixions. They were carefully placed to go between the ulna and radius bones in the wrist and to go between the shin bones in the lower legs (the pictures are nearly always wrong). The scripture that we read from the book of Ephesians refers to each of the three things that Christ went to the cross to redeem us from. **Nail #1** is the world – the secular environment that we live in is predisposed against God and righteousness. The attractions of this world distract people from living for God. Much of what condemns us from this world is not in what we do but in what we fail to do for God’s glory. It is the idea that we settle for the good instead of the best. **Nail #2** is the flesh – inborn sinfulness. It is the part that Paul talks about when he says: “when I would do good, evil is present with me.” This is the inborn sin nature that we all start out with and must const-antly be dealt with even after we are saved. **Nail #3** is the devil. He is the enemy of Christ and the hater of our souls. He gets blamed for much and is guilty of much more. He happily holds Christ to the cross.

**4 Given:** Because of 1,2, &3 we are offered the gift of forgive-ness. It is only because of the cross that our sins can actually be forgiven and removed completely from our lives.