

Sermon: No Shortage of Suffering
Owen
Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday
Staunton
Matthew 26:14-27:66
April 5, 2020

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Today is the Sunday of the Passion, a.k.a. Palm Sunday. The word *passion* has its root in the Latin word for *suffer*.

There is no shortage of suffering in today's Passion Narrative we're about to read! Judas betrays Jesus; he *suffers* a loss of confidence in Jesus, then repents. He *suffers* such a troubled conscience that he throws his thirty pieces of silver into the Temple and hangs himself. While Judas is the one known as "The Betrayer", in Matthew's account, Jesus says to the rest of the disciples that they will all become deserters because of Jesus. They betray Jesus, too.

No doubt, all of the disciples *suffer* shame and guilt.

And if Pilate himself doesn't *suffer* guilt, his wife sure does! She tries to stop Pilate from having anything to do with Jesus because of what she has *suffered* from a dream about Jesus.

And then, of course, Jesus himself *suffers*. Anticipating his death, he agonizes. He *suffers*, too, as he's abandoned by his follower. And finally he *suffers* death on the cross.

But while the readings will stop here today, the story doesn't end here. Some good news awaits us when we turn the page.

There is no shortage of suffering in our lives today. Because of the coronavirus, we are all suffering in varying degrees:

Dreams have been delayed.

Plans have been put on hold.

Jobs have disappeared.

Disappointments and grief abound.

People are getting sick and dying at astonishing rates.

Yes, we are all suffering in numerous ways.

But the story is not over yet. Even while we live in these strange times of suffering and confusion, some good news awaits us.

Today marks the beginning of Holy Week. While we focus on the Passion or suffering of Jesus, we can focus on being *compassionate* toward others. *Compassion* means to *suffer with*. May we pay attention to those around us and offer our solidarity.

As we suffer with others, may the love of Jesus shine through us.

Amen.