

Station 5: (suffering leads to compassion) Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Scripture: Mark 15: 25-27

It was the third hour when they crucified Him. The written notice of the charge against him read:

The King of the Jews.

They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.



This "quilt" was created in 1992 and since then, more groups of people would be identified as people who suffer greatly because we have silenced them, ignored them, acted superior to them, and displayed disgust or anger towards them.



Reflection:

Think about the groups of people you may have caused suffering to by your own personal actions or by allowing laws and governance that support...

...silencing them...

- children
- black voters
- abused women and men
-

... ignoring them

- homeless
- people with disabilities
- the elderly
- mentally ill

...showing distain or disgust for them...

- LGBTQ
- muslims, jews, buddhists, etc.
- immigrants
- politicians
- Vietnam veterans
- strong women
- Americans of mixed ethnicity

*To whom have you caused suffering? How have you or a loved one suffered at the hands of others?

Interactive directions

1. On an index card, write one word that describes the group that has suffered or caused suffering.

PONDER:

“Until we learn to love others as ourselves, it's difficult to blame broken people who desperately try to affirm themselves when no one else will.” Richard Rohr

The cross solved our problem by first revealing our real problem, our universal pattern of scapegoating and sacrificing others. The cross exposes forever the scene of our crime.” Richard Rohr

The “cross,” rightly understood, always reveals various kinds of resurrection. It’s as if God were holding up the crucifixion as a cosmic object lesson, saying: “I know this is what you’re experiencing. Don’t run from it. Learn from it, as I did. Hang there for a while, as I did. It will be your teacher. Rather than losing life, you will be gaining a larger life. It is the way through.” Richard Rohr

The truth is that nothing we do for the suffering other ever goes unnoticed or unnoted. The kindness we bring to great moments of pain and grief marks us and lasts forever not only in the heart of the person whose pain we assuage but in our own soul as well. Sr. Joan Chittister

Compassion is the wish to see others free from suffering.
Dalai Lama

Compassion for the other comes out of our ability to accept ourselves. Until we realize both our own weaknesses and our own privileges, we can never **tolerate lack** of status and depth of weakness in the other.” -- Sr. Joan Chittister

Every single being, even those who are hostile to us, is just as afraid of suffering as we are, and seeks happiness in the same way we do. Every person has the same right as we do to be happy and not to suffer. So let's take care of others wholeheartedly, of both our friends and our enemies. This is the basis for true compassion. Dalai Lama

"Let suffering, personal or witnessed, evoke compassion, until you reach a point where your compassion is spontaneous without the need for suffering." Dr. Amit Sood

Dear friend,

Suffering, personal or witnessed, often leaves a residue. That residue could be a painful scar that invades many future conscious moments. This scar takes away hope, crushes trust, and makes you fearful and paranoid. An event of suffering thus can seed a lifetime of unhappiness. Different names capture this ongoing suffering—post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic stress, battle fatigue, burnout, and more.

The residue could also lead to a changed worldview. One engages with life in all its richness and becomes gentler and more patient. Relationships improve, priorities change, and newer possibilities emerge. This new perspective recognizes each moment without suffering as precious and transient. One becomes stronger and more resilient to future suffering. Such resilience doesn't lead one back to just the baseline; it raises the baseline—one grows as a result of the tumble. No wonder some experts call this phenomenon post-traumatic growth. It is important to recognize that trauma itself doesn't lead to growth. Trauma wakes up the individual to recruit greater inner resources and develop a more mature viewpoint to start on the growth trajectory. Further, growth itself doesn't guarantee an end to pain; growth and pain often coexist, although the pain amid growth feels more tolerable.

How can you “choose” the growth trajectory? The more intentional you are about how you look at your adversity, particularly in its early, delicate phase, the greater the likelihood of growth. Learning to find the right within the wrong, accepting that some adversities are part of life, and trying to find meaning in adversity are useful first steps. Having caring people around you who are willing to listen and provide a wise counsel greatly helps.

Adversity-stimulated growth preserves hope. Such growth doesn't let adversity diminish the light of compassion within you. Adversity kindles stronger compassion. Initially, such compassion extends only to those one knows are suffering. Gradually one breaks this barrier and recognizes that the list of suffering people includes everyone, even those who may have knowingly or unknowingly caused suffering.

That land is blessed where compassion thrives without the personal experience of suffering. Most places on earth, however, need suffering to evoke compassion. Suffering that doesn't evoke compassion may not fulfill its potential purpose. We should create a world where compassion sprouts without the need for suffering. Until we reach it, let suffering create, not a scar, but a mind that is willing to give and receive kindness.

May you never suffer; may your suffering make you stronger and kinder.

Take care.

Amit

Interactive Directions

***How can our suffering cause us to be more compassionate towards those we might hurt or who have hurt us?**

- 2. On the back of the card, ask Jesus for whatever you need to move suffering to compassion.**
- 3. "Nail" (with a pushpin or thumbtack) your sign to a tree outside.**

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus;

In this time of world crisis, stress, anxiety, fear, sickness and death; this unknown virus, is crossing all cultural, demographic, social, spiritual, financial and political barriers.

Jesus you were burdened with the weight of the cross; made fun of, mocked, ridiculed and crucified, you suffered for us.

Jesus you died for us: forgiveness, compassion and love.

Forgiveness is in my heart; I will lead by my actions, words, and heart

Compassion is in my heart, I will lead by my actions, words and heart

Love is in my heart, I will lead by my actions, words and heart

I will reach deep into myself, I will talk with God. I will know what to do.

Now is the time for me to lead by my actions, words and heart.

In Jesus name we pray: Amen

written by Diane

