

Suffered Under Pontius Pilate Mark 15:1-20

In our creed, we often cite the line, **"Suffered Under Pontius Pilate."** So, who is Pilate, and how exactly did Jesus suffer under him? We are introduced to him here.

We will focus on two ways that Jesus suffered today: **(1) physical pain, and (2) personal shame.**

Most people think of **the physical sufferings** of Christ when thinking on the passion event, but that's not the only way Jesus suffered.

We often fail to consider the shame of the cross.

- Hebrews says, "he endured the cross, despising the shame..."

Think about the shame that you have endured in your life.

Do you have any experiences of being **embarrassed? Mocked? Disgraced? Rejected? Being bullied?**

My experiences have to do with experiences in school....

- When I was in grade school, I would get **bullied every day on the bus... I didn't want to get on the bus....**
- In 8th grade, I was invited to play on the varsity baseball.... I became the starting shortstop in 8th grade, but that didn't keep me from **getting "initiated" on a school bus...**
- At basketball camp, as a freshman, I locked **myself up in the dorm room, trying to defend myself with razor blades**, in order to avoid the hazing that happened every year at camp...

Some of you younger students may be enduring shame and embarrassment in school presently....

- People make fun of the way **you talk**
- They make fun of the fact that **your phone is cheap**
- They make fun of you because **you don't have a car**
- Or that you're not **getting good grades....**

Others of you would tell your story of shame and there would be nothing light or funny about it...

Maybe you've been shamed because:

- Someone has **lied about you...**
- Someone that should have loved and protected you actually **abused you... or abandoned you...**
- Some took advantage of you **sexually...** Then told you to **be quiet...** You felt **confused, gross.**
- Someone **verbally attacked you....**
- Maybe someone **cheated you.**

Or - maybe **you were the abuser** and you feel shame because of your sin.

There are two types of shame:

1. **The shame you should feel because you've sinned against God.**
2. **The shame you shouldn't feel because someone sinned against you (Misplaced shame).**

Here's the good news: Jesus can deal with both types of shame!

- Concerning the shame you feel because of your sin: **He forgives sin, removing our guilt and shame! He cleanses us.**
- Concerning the shame you shouldn't feel because of someone's sin against you: **Jesus can identify with you in your shame, and shows you how to endure it. He was shamed.**

So, we should ponder his physical suffering.

We should ponder his substitutionary atonement (for it is the heart of the gospel).
And we should also consider the shame he endured.

It's actually surprising that so many of the **gory details** of the physical sufferings are left out.

- Mark simple says, **"they scourged him"** (v. 15). No details.
- Then he records a bit of the physical abuse in the mockery of Jesus – **but not much** (16-20).
- Then when it comes to the crucifixion, he simple says, **"they crucified him"** (24).
 - That's it? He just got crucified?
 - There's no sensationalism.
 - There's little sentimentality – it's matter of fact.
- Then, **Jesus dies quickly**. Notice, Pilate is surprised he's already dead (15:44).

While the physical suffering is clearly **highlighted** and **important**, **it's not all Mark wants us to see**.

We must see the shame of it all.

Chapter 15 is loaded with **expressions of shame**:

- Injustice – The authorities fail to defend him.
- Rejection – The people want him dead in the place of a murderer
- Mockery – They taunt him, make fun of him, deride him
- Crucifixion – They disgracefully execute him

"To die by crucifixion was to plumb the lowest depths of disgrace ... a punishment for those who were subhuman" (F.F. Bruce)

The astonishing fact about this experience of shame is **who was being shamed**.

He who deserves the highest honor is shamed!

- One of the twelve betrays him
- His closest friends leave him
- False witnesses testify against him
- A governor won't defend him
- Religious leaders falsely accuse and slander him – they stir up a crowd to promote his crucifixion
- Jewish people reject Him
- Later, people just passing by "deride him" and "wag their heads at him" (29)
- Even those who were crucified with him "reviled him." (32)
- His stripped
- He's spit upon, blindfolded, punched in the face...
- He's mocked
- Stripped of dignity.
- Utterly alone.
- He can't even carry his own cross. More shame.
- He dies hanging on a cross.

What did he do to deserve this?

- He healed the sick. Raised the dead.
- He fed the hungry
- He elevated women
- He taught the words of life.
- He cared for the poor.

He should have received accolades.

- The Noble Peace Prize
- A Medal of Honor.
- He should have been honored, respected.

But instead, we read of these shameful events.

Yet, in the midst of the shame, there's irony.

Shame will be replaced with honor.

He will be given the name that is above every name.

So let's fix our eyes on Jesus today, so that we may not grow fainthearted.

Read **Hebrews 12:1-3**:

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Consider Jesus – consider how he endured the shame and suffering – and persevere by faith. Consider that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father – vindicated, glorified, and ready to help us in time of need – and endure hardship.

Allow me to point out three aspects of Jesus' shame and suffering in these verses:

#1: He Experienced Injustice (15:1-5)

V. 1: This is not a new meeting but a continuation of the meeting in chapter 14.

- The late night meeting was illegal.
- They need a daytime meeting to justify their actions.
- The want Jesus executed before the Sabbath begins: Friday evening at sundown.
- So they approach Pilate.
- The Sanhedrin (Jewish council) could not carry out death sentences. The Roman government handled that.
 - Stephen (Acts 7) was killed by a mob, not legally.
 - So they had to convince Pilate that Jesus was guilty of a crime worthy of death.
- The Romans didn't consider blaspheme (a previous charge) to be a capitol offense.
- So they trump up another charge: Treason against Rome.
- That's why Pilate asks him about being a King (v. 2).
- Pilate could care less about Jewish politics. He could care less about religious disputes. So they have to include something about Rome to get him to act.
- This was a capitol offense.
- Jesus wasn't a political revolutionary; yet, here He is being charged for that very thing.

Pilate: Quick Facts

- The Roman governor of Judea.
- Appointed by Tiberius Caesar in A.D. 26. He governed until A.D. 36.

- These dates are important for dating the ministry of Jesus and providing evidence for **the historicity of the Bible**.
- He was in charge of the **army, collecting the taxes for Rome** and keeping the **peace**.
- **He appointed the high priests and decided cases of capital punishment.**
- He was a **true politician** in the most negative sense.
- He **made decisions that would best advance his status and keep him in the good graces of Rome.**
- **The well being of people was secondary to his political advancement.**
- He was often **harsh** to the Jewish people.

Most important: He had the power to condemn Jesus or to reverse the council's decision and free Jesus.

Will Pilate be driven by **integrity or self-interest?**

Will he do **what's right** or what's **popular?**

V. 2: Mark's account of the trial is the briefest of the Gospels.

- Pilate must have **already heard the charge** against Jesus when he asks, "Are you the King of the Jews?" This question has **clear political overtones**.
- **Luke 23:2:** They brought **three** charges against Jesus: (1) **Misleading the nation**, (2) **forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar**, and (3) **saying He is the Christ**.
- **Number 1 and 2 were flat out lies!**
- **Number 3?** Jesus' answer: "**You have said so.**" Literally, "You say."
 - **"Yes, it is as you say" (NIV)**
 - **14:62 – unambiguous affirmation**
- He's **then silent**.
- It begs the question, "**What kind of King is He?**"
- **John reports more of what Jesus said, and answers this question:**

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

- **"I'm not a threat to Rome."**
- **"I'm a different kind of King."**

3: The chief priests continue with the lies. Luke adds:

⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." ⁵ But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

4-5: Pilate is **amazed by the silence of Jesus** (cf., Matt 27:14).

- The other writers describe Pilate saying, "**I find no guilt in this man**" (Lk 23:4; Jn 18:38)
- Pilate tried to wash his hands of Jesus and send Him to **Herod Antipas, who was in Jerusalem at the time** (Luke 23:6-12).
 - Herod was amused by Jesus and wanted to see some miraculous sign.
- Before Herod, **Jesus was also silent**.
 - "Jesus would not say a single word to this evil murderer of John the Baptist. He does not toss His pearls before pigs (Matt 7:6)" (Akin).

- They **mocked him and sent him back to Pilate** (Lk 23:10-11).
- Luke then says both Pilate and Herod (now friends) both found Jesus innocent (Lk 23:13-16).
- Pilate concluded, "I will punish and release him" (Lk 23:16)

Throughout this journey to the cross, **Isaiah 53 could be scrolling at the bottom of the screen.**
At this point you this verse is **appropriate**:

"He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet He did not open His mouth."
(Is 53:7)

In saying nothing, Jesus was actually saying something astonishing.
In His silence, He was surrendering to the Father's will.

Irony

One thing to notice in chapter 15 is the **dramatic irony of this story.**

Dramatic irony is when the audience knows something the characters in the story don't know.

We know who Jesus is, and so the irony is everywhere.

The church father Cyprian:

He was even covered with the spittle of his revilers, when, but a short time before, with his own spittle he had cured the eyes of the blind man ... he who has offered us the cup of salvation was given vinegar to drink. He the innocent, he the just, nay rather, innocence itself and justice itself is counted among criminals, and truth is concealed by false testimonies. He who is to judge is judged and the Word of God, silent, is led to the cross.

- The one who is being **judged** – Is the **Judge!**
- The one who is **silent** – Is the **Word of God** - who sustains the world by the word of his power; who speaks the very words of life.
 - One day, "**Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him**" (Isaiah 52:15)
- Next we see that **justice himself will be counted among criminals...**
- **And then the one who is mocked as King – is King!**
- The one who is powerless to **carry His cross** – has transcendent power.

#2: He Experienced Rejection (15:6-15a)

V. 6: Pilate knew Jesus was innocent but he had to deal with the **Jewish Mob.**

- He decides to give **the people a choice.**
- Mark adds it was a Roman custom to release a prisoner at Passover.

7-9: We're introduced to the alternative: **Barabbas.**

- He had led **an insurrection in the city.**
- He was **a murderer.** He may have been **a Zealot.**
- **So Barabbas, a murderer, or Jesus, the innocent one?**
- Barabbas literally means, "**son of Abba**" yet, it is Jesus who is **the true Son of the Father.** More irony.

Should the one who rules by force be set free, or the one who rules by truth and sacrificial love?

9: "King of the Jews" is obviously a sarcastic remark, but more irony. He really is the King.

10: Pilate not only knows Jesus is innocent, but He also discerns **the motives of the council: envy.**

- **Stop and ponder the seriousness of envy.**
 - This is not the only time envy has led someone to murder.
 - Be careful to not let envy grow in your heart.

11: The chief priests stir up the crowd to release Barabbas.

- So **despite the fact that Pilate thinks he's innocent, he agrees.**
- **His wife** had also warned him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I've suffered terribly in a dream because of Him!" (Matt 27:19).
- **But Pilate is a weak, royal coward. He's a man without a chest.**
- The **council is wicked.**
- The **crowd is wild.**

12: The question: "What should I do with Jesus?"

- It is clear **that Pilate was reluctant to condemn Jesus.**
- This is a question that everyone has to answer.

13: The crowd's answer: Crucify Him!

- **Are there any more chilling words in the NT than these two words?**

14: Pilate seems shocked and even tries to defend Jesus, but the crowd cries out all the more, "Crucify him!"

- They **ignore Pilate**, who once again shows **his belief in the innocence of Jesus.**

15a: Pilate, the Politician now acts in typical fashion.

He wishes **satisfy the unruly crowd**, so he releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus up for crucifixion.

- **This could be Pilate's epitaph: "He wished to satisfy the crowd."**

Matthew records the crowd's disturbing response:

Matt 27:24-25

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

The people are happy to accept responsibility for the murder of Jesus.

The substitution of Barabbas for Jesus was a picture of the gospel.

- **Without knowing it, the actions of the religious leaders, Pilate, Barabbas and the crowd spoke louder than their words!**
- **Jesus - the innocent one - was dying in the place of the guilty one.**

Again, **Isaiah 53** scrolls across the screen:

³ He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

This people should have loved Jesus, instead they rejected Him.

They despised Him.

They treated Him like scum.

Ever been rejected by someone who should have loved you? Jesus knows that sorrow.

#3: He Experienced Verbal and Physical Abuse (15:15b-20)

The physical abuse begins with the “**flogging**” “or “**scourging**” (15b)

15: Flogging, according to Roman custom, did not necessarily precede crucifixion.

- **Pilate may have thought this would be enough punishment, and that the people would let him go (John 19:1-7).**
- But the bloodthirsty crowd wanted more.

Flogging was not a light punishment.

- The Romans first stripped the person and tied his hands to a post above his head.
- The **whip**, sometimes called a “**cat of nine tails**,” was made of several pieces of **leather** with pieces of **bone, metal**, and sometimes **hooks** embedded near the ends of the leather strips.
- Two men, one on each side of the criminal, **did the flogging.**
- **Many died of such abuse.**
- **Such inhumane, barbaric actions have been done throughout the ages, as in the case of slavery.**

16: After this beating, they call about 600 Roman soldiers together.

Mark then records the verbal/physical abuse that followed...

17: They put a **mock robe of royalty on him** (a faded military garment probably).

- They continue the mockery by making a crown **out of thorns**. They press it on his head.

18: Then the verbal **insults** are recorded:

- “**Hail, King of the Jews!**” (v. 18).
- Little did they know that they were mocking the King of Glory.

19: They **hit Him with a stick, a mock scepter according to Matt 27:29-30.**

- They continued **spitting on him and insulting him.**
- They bowed down in **mock worship.**

20: After they finish with this **torturous game**, they “led Him out to crucify Him.”

Pilate made one last appeal to the crowd (John 19:3-16) but they showed no compassion.

“And they led him out to crucify him”

Here He is.

- **Misrepresented.**
- **Slandered.**
- **Reviled.**
- **Rejected.**
- **Flogged.**
- **Thorns pressed on his skull.**
- **Insulted.**
- **Struck.**
- **Spat upon.**

- Shamed.
- Led to his execution, like a lamb led to the slaughter.

The words of Isaiah scroll across the screen:

¹⁴ As many were astonished at you—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Application: How Jesus Deals with Our Shame

I want to return to this idea of shame...

Two Types of Shame

1. The shame that you **should feel**.

- In our therapeutic culture, people talk like all shame is bad. It's **not**.
- When you sin, and you have guilt, you should have shame.
- It's not good if you feel no shame for sin! You don't want a seared conscious!
- There's objective sin, and objective guilt, and you should feel shame for it!

2. The shame that you **shouldn't feel**.

- It's misplaced shame.
- It's **not** tied to actual sin and objective guilt.
- Examples:
 - The shame you feel if abused, at no fault of your own.
 - Because you became a Christian, and that's shameful to your family.
 - Or you may feel embarrassment because of what people say about your physical appearance, or your level of intelligence, or lack of coolness.
- These experiences humiliate but they're not due to your transgression.

Jesus can help you with both types of shame!

1. Jesus forgives sin.

In justification, he removes guilt, cancels debt, covers shame, and grants repentant people His righteousness – giving us a completely new identity.

- He dies instead of us; on behalf of us.
- "Our sin upon his shoulders."
- **The root of shame is severed at the cross**
- What do you do with your guilt? **Look to Jesus!**

Colossians 2:13-15

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

- In dying on the cross, Jesus disarmed the evil powers that stood against you.
- He canceled the charges brought against you – charges that brought you shame.
- HE triumphed over our disgraceful enemies.
- **“He shamed shame and revealed God’s love for, not rejection of, you.” (Holcomb)**

- Now, Shame is replaced with **honor and acceptance.**
- Instead of shameful words in your ears, hear God’s word over you in Zeph 3:

¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

Because of the cross, we are made righteous in Christ.

- If you trust Jesus, God sees us as Jesus was – **pure, righteous, without blemish.**
- **In Christ, we are completely new.**
- What will wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

In sanctification, he continues to forgive our sin...

2. Jesus helps us with misplaced shame by identifying with us and granting us grace.

- The incarnation was not merely God with flesh. Just a body.
- **He identified with us not merely as humans, but at our worst, and in our weakest points.**
- When you are mocked for no fault of your own
 - The bullies at school are mocking you...
 - The elitists are punishing you for being a Christian
 - People under your leadership don’t give you the respect you deserve
- Consider Jesus!
 - The one you worship was mocked and ridiculed.
- He’s the sympathetic high priest.
- We endure through Him!
- Fix your eyes on Jesus when you are shamed.
- Jesus can say:
 - I know what it’s like to be hated
 - I know what it’s like to be rejected
 - I know what it’s like to be abused
 - I know what it’s like to feel like the whole world is laughing at you.

He is your refuge!

- “The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you...” (Ps 9:9-10a).
- We know his name, Jesus.

3. Jesus showed us how to endure shame rather than returning shame.

Hebrews 12:2

² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

We need to learn to do this...

"Despise" – doesn't mean hate.

- It means, **"to regard something as unworthy of notice or consideration."**
- You look **down on something as worthless.**
- Hebrews is not just saying Jesus didn't like shame; but instead, he considered it as of no account.
- **He minimized it.** He considered the shame to be **nothing.**
- **How do you do that?**

Two ways (two texts):

#1: Hebrews tells us: **"Joy set before him."**

- **To endure present shame, you must believe in eternal joy.**
- Jesus believed on the side of this shame is **unspeakable joy and glory.**
- How do you not retaliate?
- That's the natural thing to do.
- Hurt people, hurt people. But Jesus shows us another way...

#2: Peter also gives us another way to endure the shame.

1 Pet 2:18-25

¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him **who judges justly.**

How did Jesus despise the shame? How'd he consider it as nothing?

- He entrusted himself to the Father.
- He believed in the end of the story – **judgment is coming.**

You get through the shame by believing there's joy and there's a Judge.

We will experience **joy.**

The **wicked will be held to account.**

So for now we entrust ourselves to God.

Shame is not the end of our story....

Jesus helps us with both types of shame – the shame you should and shouldn't feel.

**Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!**