

“For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly”

1 Peter 2:19-23

### 1. The Power of Narrative -

- The betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus are provided to us in narrative form (Matt. 26 & 27).
- Narrative is a powerful way to communicate truth(s). The narrative grips us, and the truths emerge, as they are generally not explicitly articulated by the author.
- Narrative affects us at a deep (subconscious) level – even when we don’t fully understand what we are reading.
  - The betrayal and suffering of Jesus inspire us to respond appropriately in the face of our own injustice or betrayal.
  - The narrative in Matthew 26 and 27 provides an example (1 Peter 2:21) for us.
- How to read narrative:
  - Become very familiar with the details.
  - Look for overarching themes. They often point to the author’s intended message.
  - Pay attention to the behaviors of the characters w/n the narrative.
  - Narrative helps us see the many aspects (foibles or strengths) underlying humanity in action.

### 2. Matthew 26 and 27 present a picture of archetypal suffering:

- Archetypal: containing the essential characteristics of suffering that make it impossible to go beyond.

Best

Worst

**Jesus – Perfectly Innocent**  
 sinless; no fault; represents **ideal** humanity.

Worst instrument of death (Cross)

**Betrayal as Worst Sin**  
 Betrayal by humanity on all sides

### 3. Biblical Theme of Betrayal of the Righteous/Murder of the ideal:

- A foible of humanity is the desire to **murder the ideal** or **betray the righteous**.
- Why murder the ideal? The ideal is a Judge, and the ideal judges us, and our response is anger.

#### **Cain and Abel** (Gen. 4:1-16) –

- “Righteous Abel” (Matt. 23:35) – Able was seen to be the **righteous judge** of all humanity (Testament of Abraham 13)<sup>1</sup>
- Cain betrays Abel for no reason – murders the ideal.

#### **Joseph and his brothers**

- Joseph betrayed by brothers (they wanted to murder him – Gen. 37:18-20)
- Joseph becomes a “suffering servant.”
- God’s plan makes Joseph a Messiah-like figure
  - Messiah, son of Joseph? Or Messiah, son of David?

### 4. Betrayal –

- The worst sin – Dante’s Inferno has the lowest level of Hell reserved for those who betray (Satan, Brutus, Cassius, and Judas).
- The worst suffering – suffering due to betrayal by others is the most difficult.
- Jesus was betrayed on all sides – the disciples, family, religious leaders, Roman government.

### 5. How do we respond to betrayal and suffering?

- Jesus provides an example (1 Peter 2:21).
- There is no retaliation; forgiveness; place trust in God (1 Peter 2:23).
- The narrative of Jesus builds up our courage to face unjust persecution.
- We are inspired to stand firm having confidence that God will judge justly.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1007.htm>