

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR A) Sunday 30 August
2026

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

SUFFERING

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The suffering Messiah (Matthew 16: 21-28)

This passage follows on directly from Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah. This confession at Caesarea Philippi is central in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke for two reasons. First, it is the turning point when the disciples first fully recognise that Jesus is the Messiah. Second, it opens the way for Jesus to give explicit teaching about the kind of Messiah he really is. He is the Messiah who suffers alongside and on behalf of the people of God. Just as Peter found the idea of a suffering Messiah difficult to grasp, so have many future generations.

Our image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah is *suffering*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 16: 21-23; for reflection throughout the week)

From that time on,
Jesus began to show his disciples
that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering
at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes,
and be killed,
and on the third day be raised.
And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying,
'God forbid it, Lord!
This must never happen to you.'
But he turned and said to Peter,
'Get behind me, Satan!
You are a stumbling-block to me.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you suffered for our sake.
Heal us by your suffering and death,
that we may share with you your risen life;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Matthew 16: 21-28

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

The Cross and Self-Denial

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Matthew 16: 21-28)

Begin to explore Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why does Jesus teach about his forthcoming suffering as soon as he has been recognised as the Messiah?
- How do you understand Peter's rebuke to Jesus?
- What do you make of Jesus calling Peter a stumbling block?
- What do you make of Jesus' invitation to pick up the cross and follow him?
- What does this passage say for us today?

Using your Bible

Jesus' teaching about his forthcoming suffering follows immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. See how Matthew uses the material he finds in Mark. See how Luke also uses that material:

- Mark 8: 31-9: 1
- Luke 9: 22-27

Explore passages in the Old Testament that have been interpreted as pointing to Jesus' suffering:

- 1 Samuel 3: 1-11
- Psalm 22: 6-18
- Isaiah 53: 3-12

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Suffering Messiah
- Munch 'The scream'
- Poems about suffering

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah is *suffering*. Draw on your experience of suffering. For example:

- Reflect on your personal experience of suffering.
- Reflect on the suffering you have witnessed in others.
- Reflect on the suffering you see in the media.

What have you learned about suffering?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah or by the image of suffering.

- Create a collage that reflects suffering in the world.
- Create an anthology of passages reflecting suffering from the Bible and from literature.
- Collect images of the suffering Messiah.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching about the suffering Messiah or on the image of suffering.



EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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