
Palm Sunday 2024

FINDING SERENITY IN A SUFFERING SEASON

The seven last sayings of Jesus

By Rod MacIlvaine

Introduction: One of the things I loved about growing up in the Northeast was the changing seasons. Some of my first memories are walking the sidewalk to our house in upstate NY in mid-winter and gazing up at the white snowbanks looming over me on each side. Those early experiences gave me a sense of anticipation about the changing seasons. I love the deep red of the falling leaves, the first flurries of new snow, and the much-awaited onset of spring. Loving the seasons is part of who I am by virtue of where I grew up. One of the things I most appreciate about Oklahoma is that we're far enough south for milder weather, but we're far enough north to encounter four distinct seasons. Now, in the same way that we experience seasons of the year, we also experience different seasons of life. Of course, those seasons are far more than four. Some seasons we encounter are times of prosperity, where blessing-after-blessing seem to come our way. Those times are great, and I'm sure we all wish they would last. But other seasons are times of monotony and perhaps boredom. The kids are little. They have their routines. And a big part of love is slowing down to be present in their slower world. We also face seasons of adversity where there's hardship, pain, discouragement and loss. Some seasons are characterized by suffering. On this Palm Sunday, I want to focus on the suffering-season experienced by Jesus. Jesus' experience on the cross is like a multi-faceted diamond. There are so many ways to meditate on what he did that I don't think we'll exhaust the ways even throughout eternity. On this Palm Sunday morning, I want to think about Jesus' six hours as a suffering-season. I want to show you that how he handled this is a paradigm...a model...for how we might handle the various suffering seasons that we encounter.

1. **Jesus' experience**

Mark 15:24-32

2. Jesus' choices

3. Idea

4. Takeaways