

Easter 6 – May 17, 2020  
Text: 1 Peter 3:13-22  
Theme: Being a Doormat for Jesus

**St. Peter tells us today,**

**“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.”**

**It is difficult to spend a life of turning the other cheek.**

**Sometimes I feel as though Jesus is asking us to be doormats or dishrags and just let the world walk all over us. On the one hand, I know that Jesus is in control of all things and will avenge any wrong done to me and all he expects of us is to follow him. He says in the Gospel that if we love him, we will keep his commandments even if we think the other guy deserves a punch in the nose. But on the other hand, at what point is my silence, or lack of action enabling people to treat me unfairly or badly? At what point am I enabling their bad behavior?**

**For instance, a couple years ago, I had a person come to the church from the community and tell me a long, convoluted story about how she needed money to buy clothes for her kids. On the one hand, I knew that she might be taking advantage of us and use the money to buy booze and cigarettes. On the other hand, I am well aware of the way Jesus stopped whatever he was doing to heal people, feed people and help people in whatever way they needed.**

**When the apostles were faced with a crowd of hungry people, they turned to Jesus and said, "We only have five loaves and two fish!" And Jesus said, "Okay, give it to them." I had money in my desk from the sale of honey from the bees on the roof that the Golz family keeps, so I figured, it was found money, so why not use it to help her. I don't know what she did with the money, but my point is that this is one example of that conundrum of when do we roll over and when do we dig in?**

**Saint Peter tells us in the Epistle for today,**

**"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."**

**What St. Peter tells us is that we don't have to worry about being a doormat for Jesus if we stay focused on doing what is right.**

**When we do what is right, we are in good shape and Jesus will take care of everything else. When we do what is wrong, we are out on a limb by ourselves and there is no telling what will happen, So, the big question is, how do we know what is right and what is wrong?**

**Although philosophers and politicians like to make the answer to this question complex, it really is this simple. The 10 Commandments tell us what is right and what is wrong. You can run every moral question you ever had through the 10 Commandments and you will see the right answer. Jesus made it even simpler for us when he summarized the 10 Commandments into 2. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. All you have to ask is, "Am I doing my utmost to love God and my neighbor by doing, saying or thinking whatever it is?" If the answer is yes, you are in the right place. Go full steam ahead and trust in Jesus. If the answer is no, stop, turn around and take another run at it.**

**So back to the woman who wanted money for her kids' clothes. To the best of my understanding, and that is all we have to work with, was it loving her to help her buy clothes that her kids needed? And, to the best of my understanding, was it loving God to show her love? I could answer absolutely yes to both of those questions. On the other hand, when I am in a more cynical mood, I wonder if that**

**money went to a 12-pack of Budweiser and a carton of Camels. But that is not my concern. My calling is to love people to the best of my ability using the information I have. My calling is not to always be right.**

**St. Peter's words to us tell us that we cannot know all the information about every situation and we can definitely never know the motives of another person. He says all we can know is that "... Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...." Our calling is not to figure out who is deserving of our love or God's love. He died for all and he loves all. Our only job is to love to the very best of our ability. We will make some mistakes along the way. Sometimes, we will fail to love in the right way. We may fail to see where and when we have the opportunity to love. But run it through the 10 Commandments. They tell us what to avoid and what to pursue and when you are following the Commandments you are on the most secure ground you can find in this world. Then you are prepared to love others as Christ has first loved you and you don't care if they deserve it or not, because you know that you didn't deserve His love either, but yet, he gave it.**