

Children's Message
5.25.08
2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Good morning.

Tell me something- what do your parents say about fighting? Is it okay? Oh, I don't mean one of those little squabbles: "He did it!" "No, she did it!" kind of fights. I mean a big, bad fight. What would they think about that? What would happen if you got into a fight on the playground? What would your teacher or the lunch aides or the principal think?

Can you think of a time when it would be okay to have a fight? (ideas: what if someone was hurting one of your friends or a family member; what if someone was stealing something; what if someone hurt you first?)

So, your parents tell you, "no fighting," and the school tells you, "no fighting," but we think it might be okay to fight in certain situations. It sort of depends on different things, doesn't it? Gosh. So what do you do? What decision are you going to make when you are faced with that problem: knowing that mom and dad and the school say "no," but you feel like you need to get into it. I don't know. Don't look at me- I have absolutely no idea what you are going to do. I don't even know what I would do.

But I do know what it says in the Bible about enemies and fighting and conflict.

- ♥ In the book of Proverbs we read, "To grab a dog by the ears is asking for trouble. So is interfering in someone else's quarrel."
- ♥ Paul says, in second Timothy, "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel! He must be kind to everyone."
- ♥ And he says, "When troubles come, accept them. Do the work of telling the Good News. Do all of the duties of a servant of God."
- ♥ In Matthew, Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you."
- ♥ And He also says, "But I tell you, don't stand up against an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, then turn and let him slap the other cheek, too."

That all sounds pretty clear to me. The Bible is certainly giving us a pretty big message about what we are expected to do when we are in a conflict.

But, I know that if someone slapped me on one cheek, my instinct would not be to let them slap me on the other. But it is what Jesus said. Jesus is telling us that even when we are hurt, we do not hurt others.

But the whole thing doesn't sound very easy. Actually, it sounds a whole lot like all those other difficult tasks that we are taught in the Bible. To love our neighbor, to give all we have to the poor. Jesus set the perfect example for us and Jesus knows that we are far from perfect, but He expects us to live our whole lives trying to live up to the example He set for us.

Reverend Wiley, will you please lead us in a prayer?