

Daily Homily  
Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time, Thursday  
10 September 2020  
[USCCB Daily Readings](#)

This reading makes it seem that the follower of Christ is meant to be a doormat. We should allow people to step all over us, no matter what. Is this the right read, however?

Love enemies? The word “enemy” implies that they did something to harm us. Do good to those who hate us? Pray for those who mistreat us? Let them strike both cheeks? If someone takes from us, offer them more? What kind of lifestyle is Jesus advocating?

This is not about becoming a doormat. This is about a reversal of power and a return to real life.

For one to claim the role as enemy in our life, means they have power over us. An enemy wants to destroy. They can only destroy us if we give into their mindset, their attitude. They can only destroy us if we allow them to be the enemy. Jesus’ reaction – don’t let them be your enemy. Love overlooks all wrongs. Love sees through deception. Love wills the good of the other. Love can thwart the power of the enemy.

The same thing with hate. Hate is a power that wants to claim dominion over our lives. It is a choice to hate. And once we do, it has a power to destroy us. Jesus’ reaction to hate? Good. Good is a better choice. Doing what is good for another puts us on an uneven playing field where Team Hate comes up zero and Team Good scores the goal.

These statements are not about picking and choosing, “Well, I like what Jesus says here but I’m not going to listen to what he says there... I like his thoughts ‘Blessed are you...’ but this ‘love your enemies bit,’ no thank you.” The more we are challenged by the statements and words of Jesus, the more we are called to adhere to them. The more a statement wants us to run from Jesus, the more those words should make us draw closer to him. After all, he is not just “a way” among many others. No, he is THE WAY – He’s the one, there is no other.

So read this Gospel thoughtfully. Which statements turn sour in your mind? Which statements make you wince a bit? Which teachings do you object to? If there are any, it means don’t run but rather embrace them. That one in particular is meant for you. Not to make you into a doormat, but rather to raise you up, deliver you, and make you free to fully be alive. To be free from the likes of enemies, to be delivered from the clutches of hatred, to be raised up from the din of all this and soar in life of Christ.