

Truth or loyalty?
22nd Sunday OT
Matthew 16:21-27
August 31, 2014

In the book
Simple Truths: On Values,
Civility, and Our Common
Good, the author recounts this
story about a teenager he
knew.

"Elena was on the horns of a
dilemma.

A sophomore in high school,
Elena had knowledge that a
certain classmate, Ben that
everyone detested had been
falsely accused of stealing
\$150 from a teacher's purse.

Ben was not the thief - Elena
saw her friend, Beth take the
money. Was loyalty or truth
more important?

She didn't know what to do.

As her and the author talked together, Elena said that it would be easier to do nothing.

There was nothing that associated her with knowledge of the crime. She could stay free and clear of the problem.

"M. Scott Peck, a noted author has written, 'Problems are the cutting edge between success and failure. Problems call forth our courage and our wisdom; indeed, they create our courage and our wisdom.'

"Her friend suggested to Elena that the easy way out was often the worst way out and that maybe he needed to live with his problem for a while.

It would be uncomfortable, but I would help her hold it."

Sometimes what makes a problem tough is not that we don't know what to do but that we know all too clearly what to do.

To do nothing is so much easier - but our taking the easy way out can have devastating consequences for others.

In today's Gospel, Peter simply wants to protect Jesus from the suffering he has predicted - but Jesus sharply rebukes Peter for trying to diminish or skirt the cross because it is difficult.

Discipleship is not, as poor Peter discovers, the avoidance of evil; to be Jesus' disciple is to actively take on what is good, to seek out what is right, to work for justice, to engender peace.

As we said 'Problems are the cutting edge between success and failure.

Author Max DePree tells about a friend of his.

He says his friend is great at running the “ninety-five-yard dash.”

Think about that for a moment.

Normally runners are good at the 100-yard dash.

But this guy was good at the “ninety-five-yard dash.”

“That is a distinction I can do without,” says Max DePree.

“Lacking the last five yards makes the first ninety-five pointless.”

Christ needs disciples who will run those final five yards, and complete the 100 yard dash. That is what discipleship is all about...finishing the race into eternity.

Our prayer is that we embrace the faith of the cross: a faith that understands that the crosses of our lives are the vehicles for bringing God's promise of resurrection into our lives and the lives of those we love.

It is only with faith that we can finish the race.

I almost forget, what did or friend, Elena do about her Beth, did she tell the truth about who really stole the money so the guilty would go free, did she confront her best friend Beth and tell her she saw her steal the money, or did she continue to conceal the truth to protect her friend and let Ben, who already had a bad reputation take the blame.

Live with for a while, and remember in reality each one us are Elena, because we have all been in that situation before.

For that reason I will let you decide!