

Resistance is futile

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Anyone who is familiar with Star Trek knows about the Borg, a seemingly soulless race of cyborgs. The Borg's main task is to assimilate other species and bring them into the Collective. Science fiction geeks everywhere know the Borg's catchphrase: "Resistance is futile."

Resistance is futile. Jesus is sitting around talking to a crowd when some Pharisees come by. Looking agitated, they make their way to Jesus. Breathlessly they warn him to leave the area—because King Herod has plans to kill him.

Jesus doesn't look concerned. In fact, he looks annoyed. He tells the Pharisees to give Herod a message: he is busy doing God's work and has no time for a "fox" like Herod.

This passage gives us two people who use power in very different ways. Herod is the king installed by Rome to keep tabs on the Israelites. He is ruthless in his rule; he has John the Baptist locked up and eventually executed. Herod's agenda is simple: total control or else. Resistance to him seemed futile.

On the other side we have Jesus, who is hard at work using his power to cast out demons and heal people. He is busy, and not even death will stop him. Jesus also has an agenda—and it challenges Herod and the forces in Jerusalem that kill the emissaries of God.

If you compare these two powers, it seems like Jesus is on the losing side. He has no army. He ends up getting killed by rulers like Herod. Resistance is futile.

But in reality, Jesus doesn't lose. His work of healing all of creation lasts long after Herod and Rome have passed on.

The struggle between Herod and Jesus reverberates through history. Through a simple man from India who stood against an entire empire. Through a young, black minister who fought for the civil rights of all without repaying violence in kind. Through the countless men and women in Eastern Europe who stood against a totalitarian ideology.

We think of Lent as a somber time, as Jesus heads toward Jerusalem and his death. But Lent can also be a time of hope. It's a reminder that God's reign is coming and that not Herod, not Pilate, not Ceasar will be able to stop it. Their resistance to it is futile.