

Father Bernie Lindley

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Church

This is Father Bernie Lindley from St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, for Voices.

A few weeks ago, when the smoke was at its worst and the fire was still growing, someone stole my Jeep Cherokee out of my driveway. I made a police report, but I also made a post on Facebook. When my Jeep was finally found last week, it was because dozens (if not hundreds) of people were on the lookout because of that Facebook post. A guy that I haven't met found it abandoned in the woods in Crescent City and told a guy that I do know, who, in turn, called the police and got my Jeep back to me.

I'm glad to have it back. The thing that has been haunting my thoughts, however, is the fact that the people that took it are still undoubtedly visiting my neighborhood with no consequences for what they did. The thought of hiding in the shadows of my porch with a shotgun waiting for the culprit to come take it again has crossed my mind. I've also thought about booby-trapping my Jeep with pepper spray or some high voltage mechanism attached to the door handle. Of course, the problem is that I'm most likely to just lose a lot of sleep to no avail, or to accidentally electrocute my ownself rather than the Jeep thief.

The fact is I want justice. I want this guy and his accomplices to pay for what they did to me. My rage reflex runs strong. But, even in my anger, I know in the back of my mind that I am supposedly a Christian and the leader of a Christian community and that I have to hold myself to a standard that has been set by Jesus. I tell others to pray for those that hurt them. "Bless and do not curse," I say as I paraphrase the New Testament.

Now I have to tell myself what I have so many times said to others. And it is hard for me to hear, too.