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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for Sunday, March 24, 2019

Third Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Year C

Scripture: [Luke 13:1-9](#) [**Summary:** *God Helps Us Grow*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

ASK (a.k.a. *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning! I have a question for you...
- What do you think would happen if you **only** ate ice cream, chocolate cake, potato chips, cookies and candy every day? And then, you only drank soda – even brushed your teeth with it!? What do you think would happen? (*wait for answers*)
- That's right, you probably wouldn't feel very good after awhile, would you?
- Why is that, do you think? (Because that is not healthy food and makes us feel *unhealthy* when we eat too much of it)
- What are some healthy foods that we can eat that will help us feel healthy? (*wait for answers*)
- And do other people in your life help you to eat these foods - even when you sometimes don't want to?

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- I ask about healthy and unhealthy foods because a similar thing is being talked about in today's scripture story.
- In today's scripture story, Jesus tells his disciples a story about a gardener.
- The story goes like this: An owner of some land wants a gardener to cut down a fig tree because it's not bearing any fruit.
- To "bear fruit" is a fancy way of saying that a tree grows fruit on its branches – except this tree wasn't growing fruit on its branches and that's why the owner wanted to cut it down.

- But the gardener says to the owner, “Let’s give the tree some more time. During that time, I’ll give it some extra special fertilizer and then we’ll see how it does.”
- Fertilizer, as you may know, is extra-healthy food for a tree. And the gardener wants to help the tree bear fruit by giving it some of that extra healthy food.
- When the owner hears the landowner’s plan, he agrees to give the tree another year to bear fruit.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- If we pretend that the gardener in the story is like God, then we see that God is helping the tree to grow and bear fruit by giving it better food.
- And, if we pretend that we are like the tree in the story, then we might think about what some of that healthy food might be that God offers us.
- For instance, God’s love, wisdom, and patience are all healthy things that can help us grow stronger on the inside.
- And, what today’s story is meant to remind us, I think, is if we receive God’s love, wisdom, and patience – then we will have more of God’s love, wisdom, and patience to share with others.
- Just like a tree that is given healthy food is better able to bear fruit, the same is true for us with God.
- The more of God’s love, wisdom, and patience we receive, the healthier and stronger we become – which is good for us *and* those around us.
- That’s the Good News for today. Let’s pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Help us to receive...

Help us to receive...

...your love, wisdom, and patience...

...your love, wisdom, and patience...

...so that we can then...

...so that we can then...

...share your love, wisdom, and patience with others.

...share your love, wisdom, and patience with others.

Thank you and Amen