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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for Sunday, October 16, 2016

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year C

Scripture: [Luke 18:1-8](#) [Summary: *Parable of the Merciless Judge*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies are needed, but you might want to recruit a volunteer ahead of time for a staring contest

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

- Good morning!
- Can you tell me the rules for a staring contest? [*basics*: two people stare at each other. First one to look away loses. Possible levels of difficulty include no blinking and/or no laughing/smiling]
- Would someone be willing to have a “no blinking” staring contest with me?
- You would? Great! So on three, we’ll start. First one to look away or blink loses. Ready? One, two, three...Go!
- [Do staring contest. Hold the stare for a good 10 seconds and then blink in a very obvious way]
- Oh man. I’m not very good at this. What hints or advice do you all think you can give me to do better next time?
- So what I hear you telling me is that one thing that’s really important in a staring contest is ONLY pay attention to staring and not blinking and not get distracted, right? And never give up, right? And be prepared to keep at it for a long time, if need be, right? Ok, got it.

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

- So in today’s story, Jesus is trying to help his disciples be better at praying. And, surprisingly, what Jesus has to say about prayer sounds a lot like what you just told me about a staring contest. Here’s what I mean:
- Jesus tells a story to his disciples to help them think about how to pray better.

- In the story that Jesus tells, a woman wants a judge to help her out. But the judge isn't a very good judge and doesn't ever try to help people. The judge just does whatever he wants to do.
- But the woman just keeps talking to the judge, never gives up in talking to the judge, and isn't upset or discouraged about how long it takes.
- And because the woman keeps talking to the judge, the judge then listens to the woman.
- By telling this story to his disciples, this Jesus is helping the disciples know how to think about prayer:
 - They should not get distracted from their praying
 - They should not give up and stop praying
 - They should be prepared to keep praying, no matter what happens
- Doesn't that sound a lot like what you just told me about doing better in a staring contest?!

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

- There is, though, one difference between praying to God and the story that Jesus told.
- Unlike the judge who doesn't care about anyone or anybody, God cares very much about the disciples. And, God cares very much about you, me and all of us.
- So even if what we are praying to God about does not happen right away, Jesus is reminding his disciples (and all of us) that we are not to just stop praying to God if something doesn't happen right away.
- Instead of giving up, we need to stay focused and be prepared to keep praying.
- When we pray like this, then we will better receive God's care, which then means we'll be better able to share God's care with everyone who is around us.
- And that's the good news for today.
- Let's Pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Thank you for Jesus...

...who teaches us how to pray.

...who teaches us how to pray.

Please help us...

Please help us...

...to keep practicing...

...to keep practicing...

...our talking and listening to you.

...our talking and listening to you.

Thank you and Amen