



An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Based on scripture from Lectionary Year C

Written for February 3, 2013

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Supplies Needed: You'll need a guitar for this. And all six strings need to be loosened so that there's no musical note emanating from the guitar when strummed. Instead, just the "clanging" of the strings against the guitar should be heard. An acoustic guitar will work better than an electric. If you only have access to an electric, make sure it's amplified to demonstrate how the tension on the strings is essential to a guitar making music. If the guitar is not yours, invite the person whose guitar you'll be using to be the one who demonstrates the guitar. The message, though, is written as if you will be holding the guitar. If you cannot procure a guitar, you could try a brass instrument without a mouthpiece, or a woodwind with a dry reed.

THE ONRAMP

- Good morning! [hold up guitar]
- Can you tell me what this is?
- Yes! It *is* a guitar.

- Can you tell me how you play a guitar?
- That's right. You put one hand over here to press down the strings and over here you use your other hand to hit or strum the strings.
- So I'm going to do that now. Tell me if you think it sounds right.

[strum the guitar that has all the tension taken from the strings – it should sound pretty bad (very metallic/clang-y). If you want, try to sing a line or two from a song while doing so, acting somewhat oblivious to how awful it all sounds]

- So what do you think? Did the guitar sound alright?
- No? Not so good? – Why do think that is? [the kids may not know the answer to this; give them a chance to try, though]

- The problem with the guitar is that for its strings to work, they have to be held tightly by two points.
- The fancy word for this holding is "tension."
- And right now, as you can see, the strings are very loose.

- This means that they are not being held tightly at all.
- And that's why, when I strummed the strings, instead of making music, I only made noise.
- So even if I was the best guitar player in the world, and this was the best guitar in the world, but the strings held zero tension, would I be able to make beautiful music on this guitar?
- No. I wouldn't.

THE FREEWAY

- In the scripture reading that we heard today, the author, Paul, is sharing a similar idea about us.
- Paul tells us that no matter how much we believe something, no matter how smart we are, no matter how strong we are, no matter how awesome we are, if we do not have love, then those other traits don't mean anything.
- What he's saying is that being the best guitar player with the best guitar doesn't mean anything if the strings on the guitar have no tension.
- So if a guitar string DID have tension, how would we know?
- That's right, we'd know by the beautiful music that the best guitar player with the best guitar would make, right?
- The same is true for us. When we have God's good love, then we will live God's beautiful life.

THE DESTINATION

- But, what does God's beautiful life look like?
- Paul then tells us. And what he shares with us is the good news for today.
- He tells us what living God's beautiful life looks like when we have God's love:
 - We are patient;
 - We are kind;
 - We are not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
 - We rejoice in truth and not in wrongdoing.
- Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

CLOSING PRAYER

Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

Dear God,
Dear God,

Thank you for your love...
Thank you for your love...

...that when we receive it...
...that when we receive it...

...helps us to be kind....

...helps us to be kind....

...and patient.

...and patient.

Help us to receive your love....

Help us to receive your love....

...so that we can share it with others.

...so that we can share it with others.

We pray these things in your name,

We pray these things in your name,

Amen.

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