

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

For more information visit rfour.org/childrenstime.html

Written for July 23, 2023

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#) [**Summary:** *Parable of the Weeds*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

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

- Good morning!
- I have a question for you: What kind of surprises do you think you and your friends usually like? (an unexpected gift, maybe a party for them, good news about a friend)
- What kind of surprises do you think you and your friends don't like very much? (getting sick, taking a test you didn't know about, thinking you did well on a test and then finding out that you didn't do well on it, canceled plans)
- Thank you for your answers. I was asking those questions because I wanted us to think about how there are all sorts of surprises in life, surprises that are both exciting and unwanted.

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

- I wanted us to think about surprises because, in today's scripture story, Jesus tells a story with surprises in it.
- In the story that Jesus tells, there was a field of grain that some workers had planted.
- However, it turned out that while the grain grew, so did a whole bunch of weeds – way more than usual.
- That was an unwanted surprise for the workers – that's for sure!
- We then heard that the workers planned to pull those weeds out.
- But before they acted on their plan, they did something really smart.
- Before enacting their plan, they asked their boss what they should do.

- The workers asked their boss, "Hey, we came up with a plan to pull out those surprise weeds. What do you think about that?"
- Do you remember what their boss told them?
- That's right - the boss gave them a surprising answer. The boss said, "No, don't do that. Pulling out the weeds will hurt the grain more than it will hurt to let the weeds grow with the grain. Let the weeds and grain grow together."
- Good thing the workers didn't pull out those weeds, right? They would've done more harm than good!

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

- We were just talking about how there are many types of surprises in life - some we like and some we don't.
- Whether we like the surprise or not, surprises often force us to make a new plan.
- One of the reasons Jesus tells today's story, I think, is to remind us to ask for God's help when we are surprised, who can then help us with making a new plan.
- Which is what we saw in the story, right? The workers were surprised by weeds, made a plan, but then asked their boss what they should do.
- And, just like the workers changed their plan for the better after checking-in with their boss, we too can adjust our plans as we invite God into the surprises we experience and the plans we then make to deal with those surprises.
- When we do that, when we invite God into our feelings of surprise and our surprising moments, then we will be better able to plan and respond to our surprises in a way that does less harm and more good for ourselves and for those 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...

Thank you...

...that you are with us...

...that you are with us...

...and willing to help us...

...and willing to help us...

...even in moments of surprise.

...even in moments of surprise.

Thank you and Amen