

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

For more information visit rfour.org/childrenstime.html

Written for July 30, 2023

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52](#) [**Summary:** *Kingdom of Heaven Parables*]

Supplies Needed: A box with a closed lid (that can be opened) that has nothing in it.

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

- Good morning!
- I have something very, very, very important to show you, today.
- That very important thing is in this box. [*Hold up the box*].
- I'm going to show you what that very important thing is, now. Look very carefully as I open the box.
- [*Open box and show them that it's empty*]
- Have you ever seen anything so beautiful!?!?
- [*Pause with a thinking face*] You know, now that I think about it...I don't think you can actually see what I wanted to show you. I should've thought this through a little more carefully...
- Oh! You know what I can do instead? I can *describe* this very important thing to you and you can tell me what it is.
- The thing I wanted you to see is very important. We all use it. And there's a lot of it (thankfully)! It's not very heavy. It's all around us – not just in the box. It actually gets inside of us. In fact, we breathe it in! Any guesses about what I wanted to show you?
- That's right, I have *air* in this box!

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

- Even though air is very important to us, we can't see it. But once I described it to you, you knew what I was talking about, right?
- In a similar way, in today's scripture story, Jesus is trying to help people "see" what the kingdom of heaven looks like.
- To help people "see" God's kingdom of heaven, Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling very short stories called *parables*.

- From the parables in today's scripture passage, here's how Jesus described the kingdom of heaven:
 - The kingdom of heaven starts small, but can become really big, like a mustard seed starts small and then grows into a big plant.
 - If just a little bit of the kingdom of heaven is added to something else, it can have a big effect on that other thing, just like a little bit of yeast can make a whole loaf of bread rise up.
 - The kingdom of heaven is so valuable that people who know its value will make great efforts and give everything they have to get it.
 - The kingdom of heaven is filled with an abundance of good things that cannot be ruined by bad things (not even bad fish can ruin it!).
- So...that's what the kingdom of heaven looks like, even though – like air – it can be hard to see with our eyes.
- Sounds like a pretty good thing, right?
- Jesus thought so, too, which is why he also said in today's scripture passage that a person who knows about the kingdom of heaven is like someone with a treasure who then shares that treasure with others.

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

- Just like air is something that is important, good, and shouldn't be kept from others, so too is the kingdom of heaven something that is important, good, and shared with others.
- With air, we already know how to use it. We know how to breathe it in.
- But when it comes to the kingdom of heaven, we have to learn what it is, how to choose it, and how to share it.
- We can do this learning by praying, by worshipping together, and by reading and talking about the Bible stories – including parables.
- The more we do these things, the more we will learn and know about God's kingdom, how to live in it (in the here and now), and how to share it with others.
- 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 about...

...who teaches us about...

...the kingdom of heaven...

...the kingdom of heaven...

...so that we can then share your kingdom...

...so that we can then share your kingdom...

...with those around us.

...with those around us.

Thank you and Amen