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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for March 23, 2025

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 healthy 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 wanting to help the tree to grow and bear fruit by giving it better food.
- And, if we pretend that people are like the tree in the story, then we might think about what some of that healthy food might be that God offers us to grow stronger in our hearts and minds.
- For example, when God offers us love, wisdom, and patience as healthy things for us to receive that helps us grow stronger on the inside...
- ...which helps us to better share love, wisdom, and patience with others.
- Just like the tree in today’s story is given healthier food so that it can grow its own food to share with the world, the same is true for us with God.
- The more we receive from God, the more we have to share – which is good for us *and* 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,

**Help us to receive your gifts of...**

Help us to receive your gifts of...

**...love, wisdom, and patience...**

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

**...so that we can then share...**

...so that we can then share...

**...your gifts with others.**

...your gifts with others.

**Thank you and Amen**