

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for May 26, 2024

First Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [John 3:1-17](#) [**Summary:** *Rebuilding with God*]

Supplies Needed: 4 or 5 building blocks (I use Jenga blocks, but cardboard bricks that are sometimes in the nursery work well, too). You might also want a board to be able to place the blocks on.

ASK (a.k.a. [The On-Ramp](#))

- Good morning!
- To start, I'm going to build a tower with these blocks that I have here
- *[Build a tower with a very unstable structure – for example, using Jenga blocks, build a tower 3 or 4 pieces high with each block sitting longwise on the skinny edges - as pictured to the right.]*
- As you can see, I'm really REALLY good at building towers.
- But you know what's weird? Whenever someone walks by or a door shuts or something, my towers tend to fall over a lot! *[if you are building on a board, nudge the board a little bit so that your unstable tower falls over - otherwise, just give the tower a little nudge from behind with your finger]*
- *[after the tower falls over]* Like that! See what I mean!? It's so frustrating.
- Do you have any ideas about how I might build a tower that won't fall over so easily?
- *[Take their advice and start building again – and maybe re-phrase what they say so that you do IN-DEED end up with a more stable tower. Be sure to say something like "Oooo – you're helping my tower have a better base and foundation at the bottom of it – that's very smart!"]*.
- *[After the new tower is built]* Oh, I like this – this looks a lot more stable. Look! I can even poke it and it won't fall over. And it all had to do with how I was building the tower at the bottom. This is amazing! Thank you so much!

TELL (a.k.a. [The Freeway](#))

- In today's scripture reading, we heard the story of Jesus talking to Nicodemus.

- In the story, Nicodemus wants to know how Jesus can do all the amazing things that Jesus does.
- Jesus tells Nicodemus that it's about being led by God's Holy Spirit.
- Jesus then tells Nicodemus that to really be led by God's Holy Spirit is like starting over. And to do that, he has to be "born from above" with God's Holy Spirit.
- One way to think about what Jesus is saying to Nicodemus is that he has to have God at the base of his tower [*point to the bottom of the tower*] to keep it from tipping over so much.
- But, to get that new base for his tower, Nicodemus has to knock down his old tower and rebuild it while taking direction from God's Holy Spirit just like I took directions from you a few minutes ago.

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

- Starting a new tower after you've worked so hard on the first tower isn't always easy.
- Sometimes you don't want to see that first tower fall apart, even if you know the next one is going to be even better.
- That's why there's a very important line at the end of the story that I want to repeat to you.
- That line is, "God did not send God's Son into the world to condemn the world, but to **save** it."
- In other words, when we learn from Jesus how to pay attention to God, some things are probably going to be different in our life.
- But - and this is really important - those different things will help us to do the same cool things that Jesus did and that Nicodemus wanted to know how to do.
- Things like share God's love, healing, and forgiveness.
- Even though starting over can be scary, when we trust God to help us rebuild, what happens next will be better than anything that happened before – just like my tower is much better now than it was because of the changes you helped me make.
- 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...

...who teaches us...

...how to pay attention to you...

...how to pay attention to you...

...and rebuild our lives with your help

...and rebuild our lives with your help

...so that we can live like Jesus did.

...so that we can live like Jesus did.

Thank you and Amen