

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for November 5, 2023

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 23:1-12](#) [**Summary:** *Jesus, The Pharisees, and Halloween*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

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

- Good morning!
- Did you know that Halloween recently happened? (yes!)
- Did you by any chance wear a costume for Halloween? (yes!)
- And what was your costume? [*listen to answers*]
- So...since you wore that costume of [*say a couple of names of the costumes that the kids just told you*] were you *really* that person or thing? (expect a lot of yeses here)
- Oh yeah? You were? Are you sure you weren't just pretending? Even just a teeny, tiny, little bit?

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

- That's one of the fun things about Halloween, isn't it?
- We get to pretend that we are someone else, someone that we usually are not.
- But in today's scripture story, Jesus tells his disciples that the Pharisees were pretending – ALL THE TIME – to be people who they were not!
- At first, you might think this sounds like fun, since wearing costumes and pretending on Halloween is fun.
- But, unfortunately, the Pharisees weren't trying to have fun with their pretending.
- Instead, the Pharisees were pretending to care about and love God as a way to fool the people.
- The Pharisees would then use their pretend love of God to tell the people to listen to them and obey them since they, the Pharisees, were the ones who best knew what God wanted.

- This was not a good thing to fool the people about because the Pharisees were meant to teach the people about knowing and loving God.
- But if the Pharisees were just pretending to care about the God, how then would they be able to teach the people to actually know about and love God?
- They wouldn't be able to – which is why Jesus was warning his disciples about the Pharisees.

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

- But if the Pharisees couldn't be trusted to teach the people about God, then who *could* be trusted to teach the people about God?
- Well, it just so happened that there was another teacher that the Israelites and the disciples could learn from.
- That teacher did not *pretend* to care about God, but actually believed what he said about God and also acted on the words he spoke about God.
- That person, of course, was Jesus, who then taught his disciples about God and taught them how to teach others about God.
- And guess what? That learning can still happen today!
- We, too, can learn from Jesus like the disciples learned – from the stories in the Bible about Jesus.
- The more we learn from and about Jesus, the more we will learn to pay attention to God like Jesus did.
- And the more we learn what Jesus taught, the more we can share and teach others in our own church communities about knowing and loving God - with no pretending needed!
- 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 didn't pretend to care about you...

...who didn't pretend to care about you...

...but kept it real about you...

...but kept it real about you...

...in all that he said and did.

...in all that he said and did.

Thank you and Amen