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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for Sunday, October 20, 2019

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year C

Scripture: [Luke 18:1-8](#) [**Summary:** *The Merciless Judge and Prayer*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

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

- Good morning!
- To get started today, let's do an activity where all of you try to clap your hands at the same time that I clap my hands.
- And, let's try to do it five times in a row where ALL of us clap at the same time.
- [To the leader: *For the first four times, clap slowly, with exaggerated movements, in rhythm, but also increasing in speed; then the fifth time, slow your hands/arms down so that you completely pause your hands a few inches before clapping. Then, pull back your arms and do a regular speed clap like the other four claps. The idea is to NOT trick the kids, but to make it a little tricky – however some of the kids MIGHT still clap early on the fifth attempt – which is fine.*]
- Well done! And thank you for doing that with me. I have a couple of quick questions for you about what we just did.
- What did you have to do to make sure you clapped at the same time as I did? Did you have to watch what I was doing? (Yes)
- During that fifth clap, were you watching me carefully enough that you stopped clapping too?
- Do you think you could've clapped along with me, especially on that fifth clap, if you hadn't been watching and listening to me? (Probably not). I wanted us to do that clapping activity because there are two things in that activity that are also in today's scripture story: Paying attention and timing.
- In other words, you had to *pay attention* to what I was doing so that you could correctly *time* your claps with my claps, right? (Right!)

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

- So, in today's story, Jesus is trying to help his disciples be better at praying. And, surprisingly, what Jesus has to say about prayer sounds a lot like what we just talked about with the clapping activity. Here's what I mean:
- Jesus tells a story to his disciples about a woman who wants a judge to help her out. But the judge isn't a very good judge and doesn't ever try to help people. The judge just does whatever he wants to do.
- But the woman keeps talking to the judge. Every day, she shows up and never stops talking to the judge.
- She doesn't even get upset or discouraged about how long it takes for the judge to respond.
- And because the woman keeps talking to the judge, the judge eventually listens to the woman and responds to her.
- By telling this story to his disciples, Jesus is helping the disciples think about how to pray.
- Jesus is teaching them that...:
 - Prayer is something that is meant to happen often – daily, even hourly.
 - And, by praying often, Jesus is teaching the disciples that they will be more receptive and in-step (or *in-clap*, if you will) with God when something changes or something new happens.

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

- There is, though, one difference between praying to God and the story that Jesus told.
- Unlike the judge who doesn't care about anyone or anybody, God cares very much about the disciples.
- And, God cares very much about you and me – about all of us!
- Which means, unlike the judge, God *wants* to hear from us – wants to hear from us about how our day went, things we like, and things we are worried about and afraid of.
- And, if we keep checking in with God about what is going on for us in our lives, then we will also be better able to hear and know from God how God wants to help us with those things.
- When this happens, we will also be better able to share God's wisdom and care with the people around us, too!
- That is 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 how to pray.
...who teaches us how to pray.

Please help us...
Please help us...

...to keep practicing...
...to keep practicing...

...our talking and listening to you.
...our talking and listening to you.

Thank you and Amen