An rfour.org Children's Time Message

For more information visit www.rfour.org/childrenstime.html

Written for October 18, 2020
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Lectionary Year A

Scripture: Matthew 22:15-22 [**Summary**: *Made In The Image Of God*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

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

- Good morning!

- To get started, today, I have some questions for you about sports teams.

- Have you ever been on a sports team or maybe you cheer for a favorite sports team? If so, what are some of those teams you've been on or cheered for? [*Listen to a few answers*]

- Do those teams that you just mentioned have certain colors, names, mascots, and uniforms that help you know who they are when they are on the field? (*yes!*)

- Can you or I buy a jersey or a hat with the same colors and names to help show our support for those teams? (*yes!*)

- So, if I'm a fan of one team and I'm wearing their colors and jerseys, does that also mean I am also supposed to cheer *against* the teams that play against my favorite team? (*yes!*)

- How exactly do I cheer *against* another team (*you boo them. Booo! BOOOO!*)

- I 'm supposed to "boo" them!? (*Yes!*)

- But what if the people on the other team are nice people? (*It doesn't matter – they are on the wrong team!*)

- I see. I have learned so much from you – thank you!

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

- I wanted us to think about cheering for different teams because that will help us to understand what's going on in today's scripture story.

- Today's story starts with the religious leaders of Jesus' time and place asking Jesus a trick question

- The question they asked Jesus was whether the Israelites should or should not pay taxes to Caesar (the ruler of Rome who controls Israel).

- This was a trick question because it would force Jesus to pick a team: Was Jesus cheering for Rome or the Israelites?

- Whether he said yes or no, people would have been upset with him – depending on his answer Romans or Israelites would have *boo'd* him!

- But don't worry! Jesus was not fooled by this trick question. In fact, Jesus gave a really smart answer to their question.

- The answer Jesus gave was, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's."

- At first we might think that was a weird answer to the question.

- But Jesus' answer was to remind the Pharisees of a story that they knew very well that says that *all of us* are made in the image of God.

- In other words, Jesus was telling the Pharisees that the image they wear is the team they are on – and the image we all wear is the image of God.

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

- Even though we are all made in the image of God, that does not mean we remember or act like we are all on the same team.

- For example, the Pharisees were religious leaders who tried to stop Jesus from doing what he was he doing.

- They did this because they forgot what team they were actually on.

- But Jesus kept inviting them and everyone else, including you, me, the congregation and the whole world to follow him and learn from him what it looks like to belong to God's team.

- And, as we learn from Jesus what it means to be on God's team, we learn how to share with others the same love, forgiveness, and healing that Jesus offered to those around him.

- The more we do those same things as Jesus did, the more we help others know they belong to God's team, too.

- And this is the good news for today. Let's pray.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,
Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus…
Thank you for Jesus…

…who reminds us…
…who reminds us…

…that each of us belong to you…
…that each of us belong to you…

…and then shows us how…
…and then shows us how…

…to share your love with others.
…to share your love with others.

Thank you and Amen