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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for September 1, 2024

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23](#) [**Summary:** *Filling Up On God's Love*]

Supplies Needed:

- An empty, smooth, see-through plastic water bottle (a 12 oz one from the grocery store works -- but you'll want to remove the label)
- A pitcher with water that you will pour into the empty bottle
- Some sort of larger container to catch whatever water spills when pouring —OR— a funnel and a towel to assist with the pouring.

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

- Good morning!
- Can you tell me what this is? [*Hold up empty water bottle*]
- That's right, it *is* a bottle.
- Can you tell me what is in it? (Nothing! Air!)
- For those of you who said or thought "Air" – you are correct!
- Which is why, when I point this bottle at someone and then squeeze the bottle, you can feel the air coming out of the bottle.
- [*"squirt" air on to some of the students*]
- The reason you feel air coming out of the bottle is because that's what the bottle is filled with.
- [*start filling bottle with water*] So what do you think will happen if I fill the bottle with water and then squeeze the bottle at someone – what do you think will come out of the bottle, then? (Water!)
- You are right! Does anyone need me to prove this to them? [*Though the temptation might be present – don't do it! :)*]
- [*Put cap on bottle and put everything behind you to lessen any distraction*]

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

- What I just showed you is a lot like what the Pharisees and Jesus are talking about in today's scripture story -- they are talking about this idea that whatever fills you is what then comes out of you.

- The story starts out with the Pharisees, who are the religious leaders in Jesus' time and place, scolding Jesus because his disciples are eating unwashed food.
- The Pharisees are concerned that if a person eats a lot of unwashed and unclean food, then they'd be FILLED UP with unclean food and then only unclean actions, like lying and cheating, would come out of that person.
- But Jesus disagrees with part of what the Pharisees are saying.
- Jesus tells the Pharisees that eating clean foods does not STOP people from doing unclean things, like lying, stealing and cheating.
- Jesus then says that people lie, steal, and cheat not because of what they eat, but because their hearts are "far from [God]."

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

- It *is* true that filling our bodies with healthy food helps our bodies to be healthier.
- But it is *also* true that filling our **hearts and minds** with God's Holy Spirit and love helps our hearts be loving and our minds be just.
- And it is this understanding that Jesus is teaching the Pharisees in today's scripture story
- Jesus is saying our hearts are meant to be filled-up with and overflow with God's Holy spirit and perfect love.
- Then, because our hearts are overflowing with God's love, there's no room in us for the fear that leads to lying, stealing, and cheating.
- And, when we're overflowing with God's perfect love, that perfect love is what we have to share with others.
- Just like with the bottle – once I filled it up with water, water is what came out of the bottle, right?
- Which is also exactly what we see happen with Jesus – we see him fill up with God's love and then he shares God's love.
- The same is true for us. One of the results of following Jesus and doing what he taught is that we will be filled with God's love – which is what we'll then have in us to share with others.
- 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 fill up our hearts with your love...

...how to fill up our hearts with your love...

...and then share your love with others.

...and then share your love with others.

Thank you and Amen