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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for September 8, 2024

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [Mark 7:24-37](#) [**Summary:** *Jesus Shows Us God's Combination*]

Supplies Needed: A combination lock – either the kind that you use for a suitcase (with three separate wheels and 9 numbers on each wheel) or the kind often used for school lockers (one wheel with numbers 0-39 on it).

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

- Good morning!
- I have a question for you. [*Hold up the lock*] Do you know what this is?
- That's right, it's a lock. A combination lock, actually.
- To be able to open it, you have to know the right numbers and the right order of those numbers to be able to open it. The numbers and the order of how you enter those numbers is called the “combination.”
- So if I were to give you this lock as an early Christmas present *without* the combination (as you can tell, I give really good gifts) do you think it would be very useful to you? (hopefully they say “no” – if they don't say “no” help them realize that they won't know how to unlock the lock)
- That's right, it wouldn't be a very good gift because you wouldn't be able to unlock it.
- So, what would you need from me so that you were able to use this lock? (“You need to give us the numbers / combination of numbers!”)
- That's right – I would have to give you the combination along with the lock itself.
- Do you think it would be more helpful if I just told the combination to you or would it be better if I told it to you and then showed you how to use it with the lock? (Hopefully they say, “Tell and show us”)

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

- Keep this idea of a combination in mind as we talk about today's scripture story.

- In the story, we hear about a man who couldn't hear or talk very well.
- You could even say that the man was kind of *locked-up* inside.
- Then, Jesus heals him.
- How Jesus heals the man is interesting. It's like Jesus is helping the man unlock his ears and mouth.
- Here's what Jesus does: He takes the man away from the crowd, puts fingers in his ears, spits – to the side I imagine – and then touches the man's tongue and finally says the word, "Ephphatha" which means, "Be opened."
- That's quite a combination of events! In fact, it's almost like Jesus is opening a combination lock.
- But there's something Jesus does before this combination of actions – he looks up to heaven – which is how the Bible sometimes tells us that "Jesus was praying in the moment."
- In other words, the reason that Jesus knew the combination to help unlock the man's ears and mouth is because Jesus was choosing to communicate with God about the situation.

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

- A few minutes ago, we agreed that if I shared the combination for this lock [*hold up the combination lock*] with you, it would be better for me to both tell *and* show you how to apply the combination to the lock.
- In today's story, we are reminded that Jesus doesn't just tell us about how to pay attention to God, but also *shows* us how to pay attention to God even in the middle of a busy moment.
- In today's story, we see Jesus step away from the noise and busy-ness of the crowd, we see him take a moment to ask God for help, and *then* we see him act.
- When we learn to pay attention to God from Jesus, one of the things we learn to do is to keep asking and listening to God for help even in busy moments, just like Jesus did in today's story.
- As we learn from Jesus how to keep paying attention to God, even in those busy moments, we will better know the combinations that God wants to share with us that will help us open the locked-up (and locked-down) situations that we and the people around us often experience.
- 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 and shows us...
...who teaches and shows us...**

**...how to receive and then use...
...how to receive and then use...**

**...your combinations...
...your combinations...**

**...for our locked-up moments.
...for our locked-up moments.**

Thank you and Amen