

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for September 10, 2023

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 18:15-20](#) [**Summary:** *Communication and Jesus*]

Supplies Needed: One balloon to blow air into. And pieces of another balloon that you previously popped (well before the children's message).

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

- Good morning!
- [*Hold up balloon*]
- This here is a balloon, as you can tell, but I want you to pretend that it is a *person*.
- And, I want you to pretend that every breath of air that I blow into this balloon are actions or words that hurt this person's feelings.
- [*Blow air into balloon – about halfway*]
- So what do you think will happen if this person's feelings keep getting hurt [*blow another breath into the balloon*] over and over again?
- That's right! The person will go "Pop!" or "KA-BLOOIEEEE!"
- Which means this one balloon will suddenly become many different pieces of a balloon. It might look something like this, right? [*Show pieces from a popped balloon*]

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

- I bring this up because in today's story, Jesus is teaching his disciples how to talk with each other.
- And, what he really wants them to understand is that if one person gets their feelings hurt by another person, then that person needs to talk to the person who hurt his or her feelings.
- The reason Jesus told his disciples how to talk to each other is because he didn't want them to go "POP" just like [*hold up pieces of the burst balloon*] this balloon.

- Obviously, the disciples are not balloons, so here's what going "POP" might have looked like for the disciples:
 - They would have stopped talking to each other
 - They would have stopped working with each other
 - They would have stopped being friends and gone away from each other..

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

- Jesus wants his disciples to know that they don't have to store up their hurt feelings until they go "Pop!" and then stop being friends.
- This is why Jesus is telling them to talk to each other when one of them has been hurt because that's how they can stay gathered together – even if difficult things happened to them or between them.
- Staying friends is a good reason to practice what Jesus is teaching to his disciples in today's story, but there is another, important reason why Jesus wants the disciples to stay together.
- At the end of today's story, Jesus says that wherever two or more of his disciples are gathered, that is also where Jesus is and will be.
- In other words, Jesus knows the best way for the disciples to be able to teach others what he has taught them is if they stay together and work together.
- In other, later stories, we see that Jesus' words *work*.
- We see the disciples do what Jesus was teaching them in today's story. We see them have difficult conversations with each other and stay together (like the Doubting Thomas story and their decision to stay together until Pentecost).
- By following Jesus' teaching from today's story, the disciples were able to stay together and share with others the same things that Jesus had taught them about God's love, forgiveness, and healing.\
- The same thing is still true for us today: When we follow Jesus' teachings from today's story, we are better able to stay together and work together, just like the disciples did.
- 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 stay and work together...

...how to stay and work together...

...so we can better share...

...so we can better share...

...your love and healing with others.

...your love and healing with others.

Thank you and Amen