

Children's Message
7.9.06
5th Sunday after Pentecost

Once upon a time there were two brothers. Their father had a large farm and when he became too old to work, he called his sons to him. "I am too old to work anymore," he said. "I will divide my farm in half and give each of you one half. I know that you will always work together and will be good friends."

When the brothers first started farming on their adjoining farms, they were best of friends and would share everything together. Then, one day there was an argument between the two brothers and they stopped speaking to one another. For many years not a word was spoken between them.

One day, one of the brothers was at his house when a carpenter came to his door and said, "I would like to do some work. Do you have any work that I can do?" The brother thought for a moment and then replied, "I would like for you to build a fence on my property. Build it down near the stream there that separates my farm from my brother's. I don't want to see my brother any more and I would like for you to build a high fence there please. I'm going into town and I'll be back this evening.

When he came back that evening, he was shocked to see that the carpenter had not followed his instructions. Instead of building a high fence there, he had built a bridge over the stream. The man walked down to take a look at the bridge, and as he did, his brother walked toward him from the other side. His brother said, "After all the terrible things I've done to you over the years, I can't believe that you would build a bridge and welcome me back." He reached out to his brother and gave him a big hug.

The brother then walked back up to his farmhouse to talk to the carpenter. "Can you stay?" he asked. "I have more work for you to do." The carpenter answered, "I'm sorry but I can't stay. I have to go, for I have many other bridges to build."

So, why would I tell you a story of brothers and farms and fences? Because, sometimes we have disagreements with our brothers or sisters or parents or friends. When that happens, we often build a fence between ourselves and them. Not a real fence, but fences like not talking or not seeing someone or leaving someone out. That isn't what Jesus wants us to do. Jesus wants us to build bridges of talking and listening and loving. Jesus wants us to build bridges of love.

Reverend Wiley, will you please lead us in a prayer?

