

Easter 4 Sermon
Kids First Service
The Rev. Megan Dembi

- In the movie Tangled—or the fairytale Repunzel for us older folk—Mother Gothel kidnaps a baby princess Repunzel because her hair can heal people, and Mother Gothel wants to stay young forever. And Mother Gothel raises Repunzel herself, lying to Repunzel and claiming to be her mother so that she could take advantage of Repunzel.
- Sometimes people do the same thing today, pretending to be representing Jesus
 - They know that Christians try to live their lives in a way that follows Jesus’ teachings, so they try to take advantage
 - Jesus thinks you should give me money, and that you’ll get even more money back
 - Jesus thinks you shouldn’t care about others who are less fortunate than you
- Sometimes people do this to help themselves
 - They want money
 - They want you to support their views
- Sometimes people tell you the wrong thing about Jesus, not because they’re trying to take advantage, but because they don’t know any better
 - Maybe someone who WAS trying to take advantage taught them those things
 - Maybe they are just confused
- Because we as Christians know there are people who try to teach us things about Jesus that aren’t true, we have to be extra careful
 - In olden times, when people herded sheep, they trained the sheep to recognize their voice—that way the sheep couldn’t be stolen or led down the wrong path by someone pretending to be their shepherd
 - Jesus is our shepherd, and we need to learn to recognize his voice so that people don’t lead us astray—because Jesus knew they would try to
- How do we do this?
 - Sometimes it’s easy to figure out when someone is wrong about Jesus
 - If someone said, “Jesus wants you to be mean to your siblings or your parents or your kids, do you think that person would be right?”
 - Sometimes it’s harder to figure it out—or we let ourselves be tricked because someone will say something that we like
 - If someone said, “Jesus didn’t really want you to share things with others. You can be selfish and keep all the stuff you like for yourself” or “if someone hits you you can hit them back.” We may WANT to believe that.
 - So we have to keep learning about the stories Jesus told and what his most faithful followers did so that we recognize when someone is telling to truth about Jesus, or when they are trying to lead us down the wrong path, like someone trying to steal sheep from a shepherd
 - That way, if someone says, “Jesus wants you to be mean to your siblings” we can think, “that’s not right, because Jesus said to love one another.
 - If someone says, “Jesus says it’s okay to be selfish and keep the things you like for yourself all the time” we can think “but Jesus’ friends used to share everything and sell their own things to help others in need.
 - If someone says, “Jesus says it’s ok to hit someone back if they hit you” we can think, “but Jesus says if someone hits us we’re supposed to turn the other cheek”

- It's important for us to learn about Jesus so that we can live the way he wants us to and so we recognize his voice—that we know when someone says they are speaking for Jesus whether or not they are just being selfish or if they are confused. That way we won't be like sheep that get stolen away or led down the wrong path by a stranger, but we will always follow after our good shepherd, Jesus.