

The Parable of the Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

INTRODUCTION:

This morning I want us to look at the Parable of the Two Sons as it is a short little parable that has huge implications to what God approves of in regards to obedience. It also confronts our comfort in that many of us just give God lip service and that simply will not do in regards to accountability with God. We may be able to fake others out, but our hearts and minds and motives lie open before the Lord.

Matthew 7:15-23

“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you’ll recognize them by their fruit.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**’

This is probably the scariest verse of Scripture because it confronts our motives and forces us to deal not where we think we are, but rather where we actually are. If we lie to ourselves long enough, even knowing we are lying, at some point we begin to believe it to be true. What this verse tells us is that it isn’t about what marvelous works you might do out of your talents or great words you might say, but are you being obedient to the will of God. Jesus said, “Only the one who does the will of My Father” will be acceptable, approved of, and welcomed into the Kingdom.

Illustration

A little boy finally sat down after first resisting his parents’ command to do so. He said to his parents, “I’m sitting down on the outside, but I’m standing up on the inside.”⁴⁷

The question we must ask ourselves out of this illustration is “Did the boy really submit to his parents even though on the outside it looks like He did, but on the inside he admits his defiance and desire to stay in control?” Remember God knows our hearts, therefore, He knows what our outward actions are motivated from deep within us.

Proverbs 15:11

Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD — how much more, human hearts.

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

Matthew 21:23-33

When He entered the temple complex, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to Him as He was teaching and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority?”

Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question, and if you answer it for Me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Where did John’s baptism come from? From heaven or from men?”

They began to argue among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we’re afraid of the crowd, because everyone thought John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

“But what do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘My son, go, work in the vineyard today.’

“He answered, ‘I don’t want to!’ Yet later he changed his mind and went. Then the man went to the other and said the same thing.

“ ‘I will, sir,’ he answered. But he didn’t go.

“Which of the two did his father’s will?”

“The first,” they said.

Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you! For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn’t believe him. Tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him, but you, when you saw it, didn’t even change your minds then and believe him.

I. Context

Mark 1:22

They were astonished at His teaching because, unlike the scribes, He was teaching them as one having authority.

Ole Hallesby

Prayer is the risen Jesus coming in with His resurrection power, given free rein in our lives, and then using His authority to enter any situation and change things.

John Stott

His authority on earth allows us to dare to go to all the nations. His authority in heaven gives us our only hope of success. And His presence with us leaves us no other choice.

II. A Conversation between a Father & his Sons

III. The Content & Meaning of the Parable

C.S. Lewis

We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive.

A.W. Tozer

It is altogether doubtful whether any man can be saved who comes to Christ for His help with no intention to obey Him.

Winkie Pratney

God is looking for willing hearts... God has no favorites. You do not have to be special, but you have to be available.

Henry Blackaby

If you know that God loves you, you should never question a directive from Him. It will always be right and best. When He gives you a directive, you are not just to observe it, discuss it, or debate it. You are to obey it.

CONCLUSION:

Oswald Chambers

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.

A.W. Tozer

The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are at opposite sides of the same coin.

Henry Blackaby

God's commands are designed to guide you to life's very best. You will not obey Him, if you do not believe Him and trust Him. You cannot believe Him if you do not love Him. You cannot love Him unless you know Him.