



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- **The Parable of the Two Sons**

- **Matthew 21:28**

**A certain man had two sons;
and he came to the first, and
said, Son, go work to day
in my vineyard.**

- **21:29** **He answered and said,
I will not: but afterward
he repented, and went.**

- **Matthew 21:30**

**And he came to
the second,
and said likewise.
And he answered
and said,**

- **I go, sir: and went not.**

- **Matthew 21:31**

**Which of them did
the will of his father?**

- **They said unto him, The first.**

- **Jesus said unto them,
Verily I say unto you,**

- That the
publicans and the harlots
go into the kingdom of God
before you.**

- **Matthew 21:32**

**For John came unto you
in the way of righteousness,
and you believed him not:**

- **but the**

- **publicans and the harlots**

- **believed him:**

- **and you, when you had seen it,
repented not afterward,
that you might believe him.**

- The key to the correct understanding of this parable is that it is not really praising anyone.

- It is setting before us a picture of two very imperfect types of people, of whom neither was better than the other.

- **Neither son**
in the story
was the kind of son
to bring full joy
to his father.
- Both were
unsatisfactory.

- But the one who in the end obeyed was better than the other.

- **The ideal son**
would be the son
who accepted
the father's orders with
obedience and with **respect**
and who unquestioningly
and fully carried them out.

- There are truths in this parable which go far beyond the situation in which it was first spoken.

- It tells us that there are two very common classes of people in this world.

- First, there are the people whose profession is much better than their practice.
- They will promise anything but their practice lags far behind.

- Second,
there are those
whose practice
is far better
than their profession.

- **They claim to be tough,**
hardheaded materialists,
but somehow they are
found out doing
kindly and generous things,
almost in secret,
as if they were
ashamed of it.

- They profess to have no interest in the Church or in religion, and yet, when it comes to it, they live more Christ like lives than many professing Christians.

- **The real point** of the parable is that while the obedient son is preferred to the first,
- **Neither** is anything like perfect.

- This parable also teaches us that promises can never take the place of performance,
- And fine words are never a substitute for deeds.

- The son who said he would go, and did not, had all the outward marks of courtesy.
- He called his father "Sir" with all respect.
 - But a courtesy which never gets beyond words is a totally worthless thing.

- True courtesy
is obedience,
willingly and graciously
given.

- Here we learn
that the Christian way
is in performance
and not promise.

- The meaning of this parable is crystal clear.
- The Jewish leaders are the people who said they would obey God and then did not.

- The tax-gatherers and the harlots are those who said that they would go their own way and then took God's way.

- This event takes place in Jerusalem right after the chief priests and the elders asked him the origin of his authority.

- Jesus deflects their attack, and turns the tables,
- so that they end up unknowingly accusing themselves of infidelity to God.

- **Jesus Christ is more than**
a quick-witted debater.
 - His teaching
“comes from above”
(John 8:23)
 - His words
must be accepted
even when
human reason
cannot completely
explain them.

- Can a five-year-old child understand why he must eat carrots and turnip greens.
 - Instead of candy and ice cream all the time?
- Hardly, but he knows that his mother loves him, so he trusts that her menu will serve him well.

- Likewise,
when we listen
to our Lord's teaching,

**we come not
as his equals,**

- but as
his faithful followers.

- Faith means
trusting in
someone else.
- The Pharisees trusted
only in themselves,
- So they closed
their minds.

- First to **John the Baptist's,**
- And then to **Christ's.**
 - We can never truly see Christ for who is really is **unless we open our minds.**

- Since God's will is the best course of action,

who is more worthy of praise?

- Those who promise to fulfill it,

- Or those who really do fulfill it?

- Jesus despised hypocrisy more than almost every other sin.

- He called those who preach the truth but live falsely
“whitewashed tombs,
- **Serpents,**
- **brood of vipers,**
- **blind guides**”
(Matthew 23).

- He went so far as to declare that salvation depends on two things:

- **#1** What we believe!

- **# 2** What we do!

- **“It is not those who say to me, Lord, Lord, who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven”**
(Matthew 7:21).

- James put it **quite bluntly,**

“For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead”

(James 2:26).

- Neither son in the parable treated his father with due respect and obedience,
 - Just as neither hypocrisy, greed or lust pleased God.
(**the sins associated with tax collectors and prostitutes**)

- Thankfully,
one son

“**changed his mind**”

and went into the fields
cheered his father’s heart
more than the other.

- As followers of Christ,
we can easily relish
scenes like this
for the wrong reasons:
- We like it when our Lord
defeats his opponents.
 - But Jesus cared little
for such vain victories.

- He told this parable hoping to stir the consciences of those who needed to repent.

- He desperately wanted the chief priests and leaders of the people to enter the
- “**Kingdom of heaven,**” and so far they were not doing so.

- Christ always has our ultimate good in mind.

- He seeks not his own glory and success,

- John 5:30

I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

- Jesus seeks only the glory of his Father, which shines most brightly in the salvation of souls.

- John 15:8

**Herein is my Father glorified,
that ye bear much fruit;
so shall ye be my disciples.**

- Jesus told two similar stories:
- The parable of the “**Two Sons**”,
(Matthew 21:28-32)
- The parable of the “**Prodigal Son**”.
(Luke 15:11-32)

- Both stories end with the father's acceptance of the wayward son.

- Let us also note that both parables are offensive to the hearers.
- The Sanhedrin and Jewish leaders would never extend grace to such “wicked” people.

- The point of today's parable is straightforward.
- Namely, that it is better to obey without promising than it is to promise and not obey!
(Matthew 21:28–32).

- As Scripture tells us, words mean nothing if there are no deeds to back them up.

- Luke 6:49

**Why call me,
Lord, Lord
and do not
the things I say?**

- The priests and elders believe they are represented by the obedient son (Matthew 21:31).
- Jesus, however, has a different estimation.
- Imagine the surprise when Jesus gives his verdict.

- The tax collectors
and prostitutes,
those whom the leaders
see as farthest
from the kingdom,
are the very ones
who responded
to John's preaching.
- They recognized
their need
and repented.

- Although they were great sinners, they were also great at repenting.

- But the priest and elders had not seen their desperate need of forgiveness and consequently, did not turned from their sin.
(Matthew 21:32)

- In explaining the parable, Jesus began by asking a question:
 - "Who of the two did the will of his father?"
 - The answer is obvious, and the religious leaders reply "The first"
 - The reply of Jesus is very direct:

● **"Assuredly,
I say to you
that tax collectors
and harlots
enter the kingdom of
God
before you."**

- **"For John came to you in the way of righteousness,**
 - **and you did not believe him;**
 - **but tax collectors and harlots believed him;**
 - **and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."**
- (Matthew 21:32)

- Jesus was applying this parable to the religious leaders of His day.

- They were like the second son, who said he would go, but didn't.

- Whereas the tax collectors and harlots who repented at the preaching of John were like the first son, who first said no, but then went.

- It must have been a shock to hear Jesus tell them that those despised individuals would enter the kingdom of God before them.

- But as Luke records in his gospel.
- Those who accepted John's baptism "justified God"
- Whereas those religious leaders who were not baptized "rejected the counsel of God"
(Luke 7:29-30)

- What did Jesus mean by “repentance”?
- The literal Greek word has to do with *changing your mind.*

- But authentic repentance is much more than merely changing your opinion, your thought process, or your mood.

- It's a complete spiritual about-face.
- And if it's genuine,
it will always result
in a change of
behavior, too.

- True repentance is in general widely **misunderstood.**
- Many believers only have **a vague notion of what it means to repent,**
 - So, Jesus' parable in **Matthew 21:28-30** is a classic illustration.

- The response of the first son explains the meaning of repentance.

- He said,
“I will not,”
but he did.

- That’s repenting.

- **The second son**
changed his
whole attitude and purpose
and went the opposite way.

- Repentance then is a
complete change of
heart and direction,
 - **not** merely a
new idea about something.

- If a Jew kept the **365 negative commands** and the **248 positive commands** of the law of Moses, **he was safe and righteous.**

- They thought that was **what God wanted,** and they rejected Jesus because of it.

- The purpose of our Lord's parable is to convince the people to reverse their lives.

- change course
- turn all the way around.

- It is repeated
by Peter on
the day of Pentecost
when the people asked him
“What must we do?”

- Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them,
Repent, and be baptized
every one of you
in the name of Jesus Christ
for the remission of sins,

- Being able to discern the faithful son is actually an act of self-indictment on the part of the leaders.

- If they can rightly choose as faithful the son who left his disobedience,

**surely they must also
be able to discern
in themselves**

their own lack of righteousness
and need of the Savior.

- Yet they never acknowledge their guilt.
- Let us never be so confident in our own goodness that we fail to recognize our need of repentance and forgiveness.

- Repentance then is **a total transformation** from sin to salvation, from flesh to spirit.
- **It's a radical reversal** of the orientation of your heart, and a new direction for your life.

- Have you been trying
to tell me something, Lord?

- Have I been
deaf to your message,
like the Pharisees,
because I am too attached
to my own ideas,
my own desires?

- Sometimes I am like the older son,
- And then there are times when I am like the younger son,
- Thank you for always forgiving me and giving me another chance.

- **You went out of your way**
to convince the Pharisees
and chief priests to follow you.
- Throughout your whole ministry
they resisted, and yet
you never stopped
reaching out to them.
 - **You are not willing**
that any should perish.
(2 Peter 3:9)

Invitation is extended:

Acts 22:16

**What are you
waiting for now?**

Get up, be baptized,

**and have your sins
washed away**

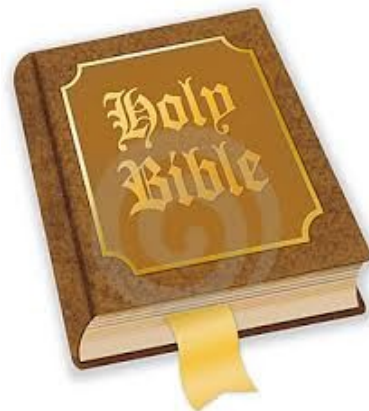
as you call on his name.'

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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