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| Matthew 21:23-32 | The Stories Jesus Told – Two Sons | Pinelands – 9am – 07/09/2025  |

**Before and After** *(pictures – Hairstyles, furniture restoration,*

 *Car restoration, make overs)*

There is always an in-between story

 Hair / makeover - work done, time 1-2 hours + A Cost

 Furniture - work done – many hours and days,

 + A Cost

 Cars - months even years + A Cost

 Houses - months even years + A Cost

In Order to get from… one place to another…

 Before to After

 There is always an in-between story.

In the Parable Stories… there is always a context or a background…

 They are shared in response to a question / situation / circumstance

The context or the background of today’s parable is one of **AUTHORITY.**

 The **Authority of Jesus** to say and do the things he does

Throughout the Gospels… there is this tension between…

**Jesus** and the **Religious Leaders** of the day…

 They often questioned him and tried to trap him

 They would have often discussed Jesus and his ministry

 Jesus clearly had a following and a reputation…

 And in many ways this irked the Religious Leaders

In today’s story we are in the last week of Jesus’ earthly life.

 The day before… Jesus had entered Jerusalem *(Triumphant Entry)*

 Jesus had cleared the temple…

 Tossing the tables,

Chasing out the money changers

 Challenging the Religious Leaders

 Scripture says… **verse 15…**

 ***“The Chief Priests and the teachers of the Law became***

 ***ANGRY when they saw the wonderful things Jesus was***

 ***doing.”***

 **ANGRY…** Is a very strong word

 *(other translations use words like: Indignant and Disturbed)*

So the Issue at hand is the **AUTHORITY of JESUS.**

Hear those words of Scripture again…

**Matthew 21:23-27 The Question about Jesus' Authority**

***Jesus came back to the Temple; and as he taught, the chief priests and the elders came to him and asked, “What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you such right?”***

***Jesus answered them, “I will ask you just one question, and if you give me an answer, I will tell you what right I have to do these things. Where did John's right to baptize come from: was it from God or from human beings?”***

***They started to argue among themselves, “What shall we say? If we answer, ‘From God,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe John?’ But if we say, ‘From human beings,’ we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all convinced that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.”***

Jesus was often challenged by his critics.

The Pharisees and Sadducees weren’t dumb;

they were tough legalists and street-smart politicians.

They ask Jesus a question…

 BUT… Jesus answers with a question of his own

 And the tables have turned.

What do the Pharisees do now?

 **They plead ignorance** and so we have a STALE MATE.

 Nobodies Questions have been answered.

**Jesus thinks… *OPPORTUNITY*** and introduces a Parable.

Let us just PAUSE there for a moment…

This is about the **AUTHORITY of Jesus.**

Not only do the Religious Leaders need to answer the Question…

 ***SO DO WE !!***

Does JESUS have AUTHORITY in our lives?

 *(Do not be too quick to answer)*

**To whom do we listen? And…. Who do we OBEY?**

It is like a Youngster playing Base Ball…

One youngster said to his teammate:

 ***"What do you do when the coach signals you to steal third,***

***and your mom signals you to stay on second?"***

As a Parent I have experienced this struggle…

 I give an instruction… Come to the table for dinner…

 Go and brush your teeth…

 Tidy your room…

 Make your bed…

The response comes… But Mom said I can…

 Mom can I play longer?..

 **Who do they LISTEN TO?** Who do they OBEY?

**IT’S LIKE THAT FOR US…**

The world wants you to do one thing…

And… God has expressly said the opposite.

**The World says…** **God Says…**

 Cheat on your tax return Pay your taxes

 Tell the White lie, it is easier Be Honest, always!

 It is Me, Myself and I Others Matter

 Just live a good life, self-first Serve and Love Others All roads lead to heaven Jesus is the Way,

 the Truth, the Life.

***WE…*** Like the Pharisees and Religious Leaders…

Are Caught in the same dilemma…

Face the same Choice…

**To whom do we listen? And…. Who do we OBEY?**

Back to Scripture…

**Jesus thinks… *OPPORTUNITY*** and introduces a Parable.

**Mattew 21:28-32…**

***“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second son and said the same; and he answered, ‘I will go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.***

I just love this Parable… It really tells it like it is!!

 **TWO sons…** Two ***REAL*** responses.

***Have you ever seen an IDEAL Child?***

This parable shows that neither son was what you’d **CALL IDEAL.**

 Both Sons are rebellious in their own ways…

 One outright… The other more skelm.

 One brutally honest… The other with a hidden agenda

***BUT NEITHER SON***… gives an **Ideal Response.**

A Real Estate Agent was showing a house to a couple who couldn’t

make up their minds. They inquire…

***"You’re the professional - Why do YOU think we should***

 ***buy this house?"***

The Agent answers,

***"It has large rooms, a two-car garage, it’s close to shopping and***

***schools, and my daughter needs braces."***

The wife says to her husband,

**“At last, a real estate agent who tells it like it is.”**

This Parable… “Tells it like it is.”

A simple exposition of the TEXT is as follows…

The son who says he will go, but then doesn’t…

Represents God’s people, Israel, and the Religious Leaders They claimed to be God’s chosen people, but…

rejected God’s ways.

 ***Are we those people?***

The son who was immediately rebellious, and then decided…

to go once he had thought about who told him to go.

This Represents the Tax Collectors and Prostitutes,

the outcasts of society, the stranger.

They saw and heard John the Baptist,

believed his message of repentance,

 and RESPONDED.

 ***Are we those people?***

In this PARABLE… Jesus is Highlighting…

 The relationship between…

 WORDS… and… ACTIONS

To say one thing… Then NOT do it… OR…

To say one thing… Then DO the opposite

Our **ACTIONS…** ***Prove*** our **INTENT.**

As the old adage goes… ***Actions Speak Louder than Words***

The PARABLE is a Challenge of… **HONESTY *and*  INTEGRITY**

**Jesus said**, in the sermon on the Mount…

 ***“Let your Yes be Yes and your No, No.”*** *(modern language bible)*

 Be… THIS or THAT

 Be… HOT or COLD

 Be… FOR ME or AGAINST ME

Does JESUS have AUTHORITY in our lives?

**To whom do we listen? And…. Who do we OBEY?**

Do your **ACTIONS** live up to your **WORDS?**

We began todays sermon talking about…

 The… “BEFORE” and “AFTER”

And went on to say there is an**… “IN-BETWEEN” Story.**

When you are Born, they mark the DATE…

When you Die, they will mark the DATE…

On your Tomb Stone they will separate those DATES with a ***DASH***

 ***That is your* “IN-BETWEEN” *Story.***

Will it be… ***a STORY of…***

**Jesus being in AUTHORITY?**

**HONESTY and INTEGRITY?**

**Matthew 21:23-32**

**The Question about Jesus' Authority**

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They started to argue among themselves, “What shall we say? If we answer, ‘From God,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe John?’ But if we say, ‘From human beings,’ we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all convinced that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.”

And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you, then, by what right I do these things.

**The Parable of the Two Sons**

“Now, what do you think? There was once a man who had two sons. He went to the older one and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’

‘I don't want to,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. ‘Yes, sir,’ he answered, but he did not go. Which one of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The older one,” they answered.

So Jesus said to them, “I tell you: the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. For John the Baptist came to you showing you the right path to take, and you would not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. Even when you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.