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## Matthew 21:23-32

23. “When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?’

24. Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

25. ‘The baptism of John was from what *source*, from heaven or from men?’ And they *began* reasoning among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’

26. ‘But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet.’

27. And answering Jesus, they said, ‘We do not know.’ He also said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

28. ‘But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’

29. ‘And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went.

30. ‘The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I *will*, sir’; but he did not go.

31. ‘Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.

32. ‘For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing *this*, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him.’”

Jesus really knew how to teach and expose people’s hearts, didn’t He? The literal definition of “teach” is to “draw out.” And this Jesus does with the simple little parable of the two sons that is embedded in this text.

Speaking with the chief priests and elders of the Jews, Jesus puts the parable before them saying, “‘But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I *will*, 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 say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.’” Matthew 21:28-31

Note the one son who at first refused the command of his father, but later repented and obeyed, was the one who truly did the will of his dad.

In context Jesus was confronting the religious

leadership of His day for their hypocrisy. They were talking the talk, but not walking the walk--giving lip service to God, not obedience. Specifically they did not believe John the Baptist, that is they did not repent and yield to John's baptism.

Jesus went on to say that tax gatherers and harlots, those who initially rejected God's will in their lives but then repented and obeyed John's preaching, would get into the kingdom of God. He states, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you."

This parable also applies to us today. Only when we are obedient to God through obeying His Son, Jesus Christ, can we please God and come into His good graces. Mental ascent and verbal agreement alone will never accomplish the will of God. Obedience to the word of God is what God has always required of His people.

As Jesus has said, "What do you think? Which of the two sons did the will of his father?"

And what about you? Jesus really wants to know. Are you willing to go to work in His vineyard today? How are you answering Him--in word or in deed?