

mercy. A heart that has been changed by God through Jesus, so we now live from his authority. His authority which empowers us to love as we have been loved, to forgive as we have been forgiven. We now have Jesus authority to go and make disciples; people changed from the heart, who follow Jesus, growing to ever greater maturity, reflecting his nature and character.

Today Jesus isn't calling me to beat myself up if my life reflects a heart of fear, or anger, or hurt but he has the wonderful offer of repentance. To call on him to heal me, to

soften my heart with his grace and mercy. Today Jesus isn't calling you to beat yourself up and go on a guilt trip, but to take the opportunity to be open and honest with him, because his passion is to pour himself into every area of your life.

Where does your life reveal a hurt to invite Jesus to come and heal? Where does your life reveal a fear Jesus' perfect love can drive out? The Good News is that in Jesus we have the power and authority to live from changed hearts, and to let that infect the people we live with. That they too might be changed from

the heart, to live as Jesus' disciples, growing to ever greater maturity as they follow him.

Let us pray.
 Jesus, help me to see through my life where I need your healing. Where am I living by fear, engendering fear? Heal me that I might always live from a heart that is motivated by you. Jesus let my life be a reflection of you, as I love as I am love by you, as I forgive as I am forgiven by you, as I serve as I am served by you. Jesus let my life be an expression of the joy of life lived with you. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
 Pastor: Tim 0427326553
 Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

25 September 2011

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

Matthew 21:23-32



In response to a question about Jesus' authority Jesus tells the parable about the two sons. The first hears, says no, but then he goes and does what his Father asked him. The second son says he'll go, but then nothing happens. How does this parable relate to the question asked of Jesus about authority?

Authority is important. That reminds me of one of the devil's temptations; "Again, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'If you will bow down and worship me.'" (Matt. 4:8,9) Of course the devil didn't have the authority to give what he promised. That's why the devil's

promises are empty; he doesn't have the authority to give what he promises. Authority is important.

Where is Jesus authority? Is he a self appointed messiah, or does he have authority to do what he says? In Jesus' baptism the Father anoints Jesus as his Messiah. Jesus is not a self appointed messiah but he comes with the Father's authority. Jesus has the power and authority to give what he promises. He promises blessing to those who follow him as their saviour, and hell for those who appoint their own saviours.

Who thinks the outcome is important?

The outcome is crucial, that's why this parable has a real sting in the

tail. This parable is calling me to have a good look at myself.

The Pharisees come across as those who have God's authority for their actions. They seem to be saying yes to what God is calling them to do. They hold the Bible as vital. They believe in the 'Word Alone'. Just like a good Lutheran. Even more, they read it. Even more, they memorise it. They could recite the Psalms by heart. They knew the laws of God, making time to discuss them at length. So far so good.

But Jesus challenges these people to have a look at their lives. He relates them to the second son who made all the right sounds. What was the problem with the second son? He knew all the right

answers. He knew what to say. He knew what to do. What was the problem with this son?

He didn't do it!

How many husbands know it is important to listen to their wives? How many parents know it is important to spend time with their children? Do I do it?

This isn't so I can say, 'what a good boy am I'. That was also part of the Pharisee's problem, they had the wrong motive. I'm not called by God to listen to my wife to prove I'm a good bloke. That would be the wrong motive. It's an act of love. How can I love someone I don't listen to?

It's important to note that the Pharisees weren't motivated by love, but by fear. If they didn't do the right actions, then God would again pour out his anger and they'd go

back into exile. The Pharisees lived by a fear agenda.

What is motivating you? Fear. How do you seek to motivate others? Fear and intimidation. The Pharisees threw their weight around, used fear and intimidation. They were living

A heart of fear doesn't produce a life of life.

scared, scaring others. No wonder they couldn't do what God was asking them to do. You can't reflect God's character and nature when you're living from fear, intimidating others. A heart of fear doesn't produce a life of love.

What motivates my life? How do I seek to motivate others?

The first son refused, but then went and did

what the Father asked. Jesus relates this son to the tax collectors and prostitutes who listened to John the Baptist, and through repentance had a change of heart.

Jesus using the tax collectors and prostitutes must have enraged the Pharisees. After all they're the good people.

They're the ones who regularly go to the temple. They're the ones who read the bible. They're the ones who

meticulously sought to keep the biblical laws. What an insult. How dare Jesus put this scum ahead of them.

But notice it isn't Jesus, they accuse themselves. Jesus simply asks 'Which of the two did what his father wanted?' (Matt. 21:31)

Is it those who live from a heart of fear, or those who live from a new heart, a heart softened and changed by God's grace and

mercy? Those who now have the heart of God beating within them, that their lives now reflect this wonderful change.

Those who heard John the Baptist, repented and were baptised by him ended up living changed lives. Not because of fear, but because they had tasted and been changed by God's grace. A heart full of God's grace can produce a life of love.

The sad comment of Jesus is that the Pharisees weren't changed even though they saw people's lives changed through the ministry of John. The Pharisees don't flinch, they continue to point the accusing finger and feel happy that God is going to pour out his wrath on those sinners.

Do you ever feel yourself feeling happy that God is going to pour out his wrath?

This passage in Ezekiel struck me; "For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Repent and live!" (Ezek. 18:32)

That's actually a repeated refrain though out this section. I don't think God wants a relationship based on fear, where when he

A heart full of God's grace produces a life of love.

comes people play games hiding from him. In Jesus, God reveals his passion is to have a relationship based on his love, where we are open and honest, trusting him enough to be real. In Jesus, the Father has created a relationship which can be lived from a heart of love.

Jesus question to me today is; which son am I? What does my life tell me?

Is my life an expression of Jesus' love, living from a heart that has been changed by him? Is my heart shaped by Jesus so that I now can reflect his character and nature in my life? The challenge is to look at my life and ask myself what it reveals.

The Pharisees certainly talked a good talk, but their hearts were full of fear, and that was exhibited in their lives. They

threatened, and bullied others believing this would make them look good in God's eyes. Believing this could change people, change their nation to be what God had called them to be. But a hurting, fearful heart, a bullied heart can only produce, what? More fear and intimidation!

Thankfully in Jesus we are changed from the heart. A heart that is now full of God's forgiveness, grace,