

Who Are You in This Story?

October 1, 2017 - 26th Week of Ordinary Time – Matthew 21:28-32

So which character are you in this story? Are you the chief priests and elders who are challenging Jesus' authority? Are you the oldest son who dismisses the Father's will only to have a change of heart and return in a dutiful fashion to take up the work required of him? Or are you the younger brother who says yes to the initial request to do the work but then sneaks away into a state of defiant indifference?

I would say that I have been all of them at some point in my life. I say that because on any given day I have to work at following the will of God. It is not easy to be good without then being righteous and judgmental of others. It is not easy to return to a relationship which I have damaged unless I'm willing to take on my part of that failure. It is much easier to fall into the realm of saying yes to God and then just not always following through. Whichever way we respond, Jesus has a message for us this week.

The chief priests and elders have been questioning and mocking Jesus' authority. In fact, over the last several weeks we have heard Jesus teach his disciples that he is the long awaited Messiah. Through the stories of forgiveness, suffering, generosity and life in the vineyard, he outlines what is required to be one of his disciples. Now he sets the record straight for the leaders of that day, as well as all of us.

“What is your opinion?” he asks of the chief priests and elders about the two sons, one who first said no but returned to do as the father asked and the second who said yes, but did not fulfill the work. **“Which of the two did his father's will? They answered, “The first.”**

They answered that the one who appeared to initially disobey his father but then had a change of heart is the one who did his father's will. Jesus affirms this with a stern warning. **“Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe.”**

Just as tax collectors and prostitutes were changing their lives, first in their response to John the Baptist, and now to the following Christ as the Messiah, so too are all of us called to change our ways and follow Christ no matter the choices we've made in our past.

Blessings!


Sue Schettler