

*“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first and said., Son go work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said I will not; but afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said I go sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, the first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye when ye had seen it repented not afterward that ye might believe him.”*

This is another parable which has an immediate interpretation which was given by the Lord Jesus under inspiration so that we have every confidence that it can be truly understood. The need to do not say is paramount. This affects us all as we are creatures of words and easy comment. Words are cheap and many are quick to blurt out various protestations which are then not backed up by actions.

The certain man of the parable is representative of the Eternal Himself. The first son who says but does not do, is equivalent to the religious Jews who have made loud verbal statements as to their own righteousness before God. The second son is also a child of God and is equivalent to the sinners of the harlots and publicans, those who have compromised with the foolish of this world and have sold themselves for money either in mind or body. Publicans are those who have accommodated the Roman oppressors and because of that were considered traitors to their nation. There were still Israelites and children of God but were in need of repentance. Harlots were women who were given over to sinful involvement with others. It may be that they were forced into such activity because of the need to find money from any

source but to go against the moral stance for cash is not the right choice. They also needed to repent.

The parable should remind the reader that those who are presently in sin, are not without hope. They will not be saved unless they repent but there is opportunity to any who subsequently choose to take action not just mouth words to extract themselves from their position of danger and estrangement from God. It should also bring to the fore the concept that verbal niceties are no substitute for actions. To say and do not, is not doing the will of God. Sadly, many delude themselves with such false teachings.

The basis of acceptance by the Father is that of doing His will. Matthew 7v21 *“Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father”*. This is a divinely proscribed requirement and yet many ignore what God has said about it to pursue their own agendas. This is unacceptable to God. It is certainly not doing His will! The basis of salvation by faith and works not by faith alone is the scriptural teaching, why then do so many hanker after that enticing delusion of justification by faith alone? The answer is obvious when properly considered, it is enticing to be so deluded! *“He that doeth the will of my Father the same is my brother and sister and mother”*. Let us be directed by the very words of Jesus and not the plastic fabricated corruption which has proceeded out of the mouth of mere men in their arrogance and pride!

For those who are interested there is a section on this parable in Nazareth Revisited by Brother Robert Roberts, one of our Pioneers, see page 267. Just a short section to read.

This parable is not found in any other of the gospel records. The parable is unique to Matthew. The gospel of Luke has the most unique parables, but Matthew also has some which are not found elsewhere. These seem to be centred around the focus on the nation of Israel as God's chosen people. God was communicating to Israel that with greater blessings, comes greater

responsibilities. Verse 45,46 informs that *“And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet”*.

A Voice from the Altar

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