

I. The Setting of this Parable

- A. Jesus' Three Symbolic Actions in Matthew 21: The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11), the Cleansing of the Temple(21:12-17), and the Cursing of the Fig Tree (21:18-22)
- B. Jesus' Authority Challenged (21:23-27)

II. Interpreting the Parable

- A. A Parable of Judgment & Rebuke (28, 31-32; 2 Sam 12:7)
- B. The Tax Collectors and Prostitutes are the First Son (29, 31-32; Luke 7:28-30; 15:11ff; 18:13-14)
- C. The Jewish Leaders are the Second Son (30-32; 11:5-6; 23:2-3)

III. Applying the Parable

- A. Not Doing the Will of the Father
 - 1. The Sin of Rejecting God's Messengers (Matt 23:37)
 - 2. The Sin of Rejecting God's Signs (12:32; 16:1)
 - 3. The Blinding Sin of False Profession & Hypocrisy (7:15-27; 19:16-22; Isa 29:13-14)
- B. Doing the Will of the Father: Repentance, Faith, and Obedience

Quotations:

"Churches often push for membership and professions of faith but allow (or even foster) a separation between believing and doing. How did people ever get the idea that obedience to the will of God is optional? . . . Talk and external appearance are cheap; what counts is actually doing the will of the Father from the heart (cf. Matt 7:15-27). Any separation of believing and doing is a distortion of the gospel message and is directly confronted by this parable. A person cannot believe apart from obedience." —Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*

"It is one thing to understand and give mental assent or even lip service to something a prophet says. It is another matter all together to 'believe him,' by which Jesus means put feet in motion in the right direction and demonstrate one's assent." —Ben Witherington III

"It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone: just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone, because it is constantly conjoined with light." —Calvin, *Antidote to the Council of Trent*, 6th Session, Canon 11

"Justification is by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. . . . Faith alone justifies but a justified person with faith alone would be a monstrosity which never exists in the kingdom of grace. Faith works itself out through love (Gal. 5:6). And Faith without works is dead (James 2:17-20). It is living faith that justifies and living faith unites to Christ both in the virtue of his death and in the power of his resurrection." — John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*

Reflection and Application Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

- 1. Have you truly repented and believed the gospel? Do you see the fruit of obedience in your life?
- 2. In what areas in your life do you see the sin of hypocrisy: saying one thing but doing another?