

Sunday Message

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 1 October 2023 • Psalter Week 2

JUST SAY YES

Matthew 21:28-32



In today's Gospel Jesus has a confrontation with the chief priests and the leaders of the people. He criticises them for being "yes men," whose fine words are not matched by fine deeds. They are great at making promises but not very good at living up to them.

Jesus uses a parable to make his point. A man has two sons. He asks both of them to work in his vineyard. The first says a blunt "no," but afterwards thinks better of it and changes his mind. The second says, "Certainly, sir," but then does not go at all. "Which of the two," Jesus asks his listeners, "did his father's will?" The answer is obvious; only one son was obedient to his father.

Jesus then explains the meaning of the parable. The son who refused but then repented represents the tax collectors and prostitutes who listened to the preaching of John the Baptist, and accepted it. The other son represents the chief priests and the leaders of the people who did not listen to or accept John's preaching. They still did not listen to John even after seeing for themselves the wonderful transformation his preaching had brought about in the lives of the tax collectors and prostitutes.

The chief priests and religious leaders liked to boast about their goodness and their fidelity to God. They were big into outward piety and making the proper religious sounds but it was all only lip service because it was not matched by their actions. They failed to show true obedience to God.

There is a danger that sometimes we too can be like the chief priests and leaders of the people. We can say "yes" to God but be far away from him in our hearts. We can promise to live in obedience to him but fail to practice what we promise. Today's Gospel challenges us to look at how well we live out every day that which we proclaim in church. It reminds us of our need for constant conversion. ■

LEARN

The proof of our faith is in our living of it.

The Christian is called to constant conversion.

It is never too late to say "yes" to God.

SAY

"Lord, help me to honour you not only with my lips but by my actions. Amen."

REFLECT

Ever since Eleanor Roosevelt more than 80 years ago, American First Ladies typically promote a cause or launch a campaign to which they commit the prestige of their office. In the 1960s, Ladybird Johnson focused on cleaning up the nation's highways; Betty Ford focused on substance abuse, Michelle Obama on education and healthy eating.

Nancy Reagan decided her focus would be the war on drugs. At the time, drug addiction was destroying numerous lives, as it continues to do. So she spearheaded a campaign that had a simple, snappy, easy to remember title: Just Say No. Her message to those tempted by illicit drugs was: Just say no. The campaign (and others like it) wasn't a huge success. Vulnerable people needed practical help and support in order to be able to just say no. They needed more than words or slogans or expensive advertising campaigns.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his followers they must not just say yes, but must back it up with concrete actions. He is telling us that if we are serious about following him, we must live the faith we profess. Words, no matter how pious, are not enough. We must go from church to world to transform the world by the kind of lives we live, because we are going to be judged by our deeds rather than by our words.

This makes our task all the more difficult, because we know it's easy to talk the talk; it's much harder to walk the walk.

As Christians, we mustn't just say yes. We must just show it. We must live it. ■

DO

Think about the major promises you have made in your life – the baptismal promises that were made on your behalf, the marriage or religious vows you professed, the commitments you have entered into. How well have you kept them? What do you need to do to be more faithful to them?

PRAY

To follow Christ faithfully is not easy. Pray for the strength to be faithful to your baptismal promises.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

All that you have done to us, O Lord,
you have done with true judgement,
for we have sinned against you
and not obeyed your commandments.
But give glory to your name
and deal with us according to the bounty of
your mercy.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly
upon us
and make those hastening to attain your
promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 18:25-28

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: 'You object, "What the Lord does is unjust." Listen, you House of Israel: is what I do unjust? Is it not what you do that is unjust? When the upright man renounces his integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself has committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, he deserves to live. He has chosen to renounce all his previous sins; he shall certainly live; he shall not die.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 24

Response:

Remember your mercy, Lord.

- Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)

- Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord. (R.)

- The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path,
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

SECOND READING Philipians 2:1-11

(For Shorter Form, read between > <)

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the
Philippians.

>If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:<

His state was divine,
yet he did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings in the heavens,
on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God, the Father.

>The word of the Lord.<

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! If anyone loves me he will
keep my word,
and my Father will love him, and we shall
come to him. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:28-32

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors

and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O merciful God,
that this our offering may find acceptance
with you
and that through it the wellspring of all
blessing
may be laid open before us.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Remember your word to your servant,
O Lord,
by which you have given me hope.
This is my comfort when I am brought low.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord,
restore us in mind and body,
that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ,
to whose suffering we are united
whenever we proclaim his Death.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.