

Saying and Doing

Lesson # 27: (Mt. 21:23-32; Mt. 23:1-4, 23-28; COL 272-283)

In our lesson today we will study about the two sons who promised to go and work in their father's vineyard. One of them said he would go and didn't. The other said he wouldn't go, and did. Though we will focus our attention on the parable itself (Mt. 21:28-32), it is highly recommended that you study the immediately preceding verses (verses 1-27) in order to comprehend the events which led up to the parable.

The parable reads: **“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward 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.”** (Matthew 21:28-32)

The Historical Context

1. When, where and to whom was this parable spoken by Jesus? “The next day [the day after the triumphal entry], as Christ was teaching in the _____, the chief priests and _____ of the people came to Him and said: By what _____ doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this _____?” (Mt. 21:23)
2. What had Jesus done to reveal His authority just before He told the parable? “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and _____ out all them that sold and bought in the _____, and overthrew the tables of the _____. And the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written My _____ shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of _____.” (Mt. 21:12-13)
3. Who was left in the temple after Jesus cleansed it? “And the _____ and the _____ came to him in the temple; and he healed them.” (Mt. 21:14)
4. When Jesus cast out the money changers from the temple, how did they respond? “Amazed and _____, they had obeyed his _____ without excuse or resistance.” (COL 273)
5. Why did the Jewish leaders want Jesus to explain the source of His authority? “The priests and elders were anxious for Jesus to proclaim Himself the _____ that they might misapply His _____ and stir up the _____ against Him. They wished to destroy His _____ ad put him to death.” (COL 273)

6. How did Jesus respond to the inquiry of the Jewish leaders? “He _____ the issue they hope to bring about and turns the _____ upon themselves.” (COL 273)
7. **Thought Question:** How did the response of Jesus put the Jewish leaders between a rock and a hard place? (The bottom of COL 274 will provide help) _____

The Central Lesson and Symbols

1. According to Ellen White, what is the central lesson of this parable? “_____ are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate _____. This is the lesson taught in the parable of the two sons.” (COL 272)
2. What is represented by the father, the vineyard and the two sons? “In this parable the father represents _____, the vineyard the _____. By the two sons are represented two _____ of people.” (COL 275-276)

The First Son

1. What group of human beings is represented by the first son? “The son who refused to obey the command, saying, ‘I will not,’ represented those who were living in open _____, who make no _____ of piety, who openly refused to come under the yoke of _____ and obedience which the law of God imposes.” (COL 276)
2. Is Ellen White correct in her assessment of the first son? Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you [the Pharisees and Elders] that the _____ and the _____ go into the kingdom of God before you.” (Mt. 21:31)

Note: The first son clearly represents the publicans and the harlots, people who made no profession of piety but who later repented when John preached his message.

3. What did these open sinners do when they heard the message of John the Baptist? “When the gospel came to them in the message of John the Baptist. . . . they _____ and confessed their _____.” (COL 276)
4. How did the common people respond to the message of John the Baptist? “And all the people that heard him, and the _____, justified God, being _____ with the baptism of John.” (Lk. 7:29)

Note: What did Luke mean when he said that the people and the publicans justified God when they were baptized? How can human beings justify God? (Study I John 1:10 and Romans 3:4 for the answer)

5. What three groups of people gladly heard John and asked him what they needed to do with his message? The _____, the _____, and the _____. (Lk. 3:10, 12, 14)

The Second Son

1. According to Ellen White, who is represented by the second son? “In the son who said, ‘I go, sir,’ and went not, the character of the _____ was revealed. Like this son, the Jewish leaders were _____ and _____.” (COL 276)

Note: It is worthy of note that the first son did not address the father as ‘sir’ while the second did. The Greek work here is *kurios* which is usually translated ‘lord’ but in this context is correctly translated ‘sir’. Though the second son appeared to be more respectful toward the father, in reality his disobedience to the Father’s command revealed a deep lack of respect.

2. What was the fundamental problem with the second son? “In the parable the son who said, ‘I go, sir,’ represented himself as _____ and obedient; but _____ proved that his profession was not real. He had not true _____ for his father. So the Pharisees prided themselves on their _____, but when tested, it was found wanting.” (COL 278)
3. What did John call the Jewish leaders who came to hear him preach? A generation of _____. (Mt. 3:7; see also, Mt. 23:33)
4. How did these Jewish leaders respond to the message of John the Baptist? “But the Pharisees and lawyers _____ the counsel of God against themselves, being not _____ of him.” (Lk. 7:30)
5. What counsel did Jesus give concerning the teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees? “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his _____, saying, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in _____ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you _____, that observe and _____; but do not ye after their works, for they _____, and _____ not.’” (Mt. 23:1-3)
6. According to Ellen White, what did Jesus mean when He spoke the words in question # 3? “But they performed their ceremonies to be _____ by men that they might be thought of by the world to be _____ and _____. While professing to obey they refused to render _____ to God. They were not doers of the truth which they professed to _____.” (COL 278)
7. How did the Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai reveal the same spirit as the Pharisees? “And all the people answered together, and said, ‘_____ that the LORD hath spoken _____ will _____.’” (Ex. 19:8).

Note: Israel’s promise was broken just a few days later when they worshiped the golden calf. The reason why they were unable to keep their promise is that they thought they could render

a legal obedience to the Ten Commandments without a change of heart (see, Jeremiah 31:31-34). God can only accept obedience from the heart.

8. How did Ellen White amplify the mistake Israel committed at the foot of Mt. Sinai? “The religious life of the Jewish nation had become a _____. When the law was proclaimed on Mount Sinai by the voice of God, all the people pledged themselves to _____. They said, ‘I go sir,’ but they went not.” (COL 276)

9. **Thought Question:** What characterized the piety of the Scribes and Pharisees? _____

(Read Mt. 23:23-28; Lk. 18:9-14)

10. What is the only kind of obedience which is acceptable to God? “Christ had shown them [the Pharisees] that they continued to _____ because they had not the _____ which leads to obedience.” (COL 276)

11. **Thought Question:** As we have seen in a previous lesson, Laodicea represents the Seventh-day Adventist church. To which of the two sons is the church of Laodicea similar? Why? _____

(Revelation 3:14-21 will help you answer this question)

Lessons for Today

1. What solemn words did Jesus speak to those who will live in the closing moments of this earth’s history? “Not every one that _____ unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that _____ the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Mt. 7:21)

Note: There can be no doubt that Jesus is speaking about those who will live in the midst of the final scenes of this earth’s history. This is shown by the fact that Jesus uses the phrase “in that day” (Mt. 7:22), an expression which refers to the final judgment and reward (see, Lk. 10:12; 17:31).

2. How did the apostle Paul underline the same truth about actions speaking louder than words? “(For not the _____ of the law are just before God, but the _____ of the law shall be justified.” (Rom. 2:13)

3. **Thought Question:** Elsewhere, the apostle Paul clearly states that “man is justified by faith without works of law” (Romans 3:28). Is Paul contradicting what he stated in Romans 2:13? _____

(James 2:14-26 might help you answer this question)

4. What does Ellen White say about those who claim to be sons of God but deny this relationship in actual life? “In profession they _____ to be sons of God, but in _____ and character they deny the relationship. They do not surrender the _____ to God. They are living a _____.” (COL 279)
 5. When do “fair weather Christians” show their true colors? “The promise of obedience they appear to fulfill when this involves no _____; but when _____ and self-sacrifice are required, when they see the cross to be _____, they draw back.” (COL 279)
 6. Is it possible to work against Christ without being openly hostile to Him? “Do not think that because you do not manifest decided _____ to Christ you are doing His service. We thus _____ our own souls. By _____ that which God has given us to use in His _____, be it _____ or _____ or any other of his entrusted gifts, we work against Him.” (COL 280)
 7. Is there such a thing as a converted person who lives an inactive spiritual life? “There is no such thing as a truly _____ person living a helpless, _____ life. It is not possible for us to _____ into heaven. No sluggard can enter there.” (COL 280)
 8. Why can’t God take to heaven those who refuse to cooperate with Him? “Those who refuse to co-operate with God on _____ would not co-operate with Him in _____. It would not be _____ to take them to heaven.” (COL 280)
- Note:** Think about it. All heaven is in constant activity. Every fiber of every being is invested in the task of upholding the universe of God. Would it be safe for God to take people to heaven who have not even raised a finger to advance His work on earth?
9. Why is it never safe to delay obedience to God’s call? “It is _____ to delay obedience. You may never hear the _____ again.” (COL 281)
 10. What is the consequence of cherished sin? “Every sin cherished _____ the character and _____ habit; and physical, mental and moral _____ is the result.” (COL 281)
 11. Ellen White has previously identified the vineyard as the church. What two other applications does she give of the vineyard? “If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your _____, God is making you a laborer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. . . . The Lord’s vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the _____ He desires it to be extended.” (COL 282)
 12. How many classes are in the world today? “There are only two classes in the world today; and only two classes will be recognized in the _____—those who violate God’s _____ and those who _____ it.” (COL 283)

