

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

**Twenty-sixth Sunday
Ordinary Time**

Gospel Word
Matthew 21:28-32

Once again, Jesus nails it. He tells a parable of two sons who were told to do something by their father. One said he would do what was asked, but didn't. The other son said "no," but changed his mind and did what was asked. Who was the obedient son? It was the one, of course, who *did* the right thing. While not specifically stated in the Gospel reading, it suggests that actions speak louder than words. Actions are also the better test of virtue.

This Gospel reading also points to the hypocrisy of "lip service" or "talking the talk," or saying "yes" but not meaning it, or saying "yes" to meet an expectation with no intention to follow through. When Jesus (and John the Baptist before him) came with a message from God, many of the religious leaders turned a deaf ear to what was proclaimed. While those at the bottom of that day's virtue scale, tax collectors and prostitutes heard the message, and changed their minds and their lives. They were open and receptive to God's word and invitation to change.

-by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

Living the Word

How often do we change our minds and hearts to respond to what God wants of us? Well, it's a daily challenge. It's a matter of being alert, awake, and perceptive. To be faithful to the truth, we will always be learning, always adjusting, and always changing. That's what it means to be a responsible person, a responding person.

Oftentimes families have special places where pictures of family members are displayed. If the pictures were taken at different times, viewers may comment on how the family has changed. Babies and toddlers become teens and young adults. Wedding pictures of a mom and dad evolve into grandparents holding grandchildren. Change is the name of the game with family. It is also the name of the game for the follower of Jesus. When was the last time you wanted to, or did say "no" to God's call, but acted your way into a "yes?"

Prayer

Dear God,
Open our eyes and hearts to what you would have us do, and give us the will to say and act on our "yes."
Amen.