



MATTHEW 21:28-32

What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard."

"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, "I will, sir," but he did not go.

'Which of the two did what his father wanted?'

'The first,' they answered.

NOTE TO LEADERS

- A reminder of our Good Friday service, taking place at the church on the 15th of April at 7:30am. Coffee will be on sale, and there will be hot cross buns for everyone!
- And we'll be celebrating Easter on Sunday the 17th of April at all three services: 7:30am, 9:00am and 6:00pm.

START TALKING

1. What was a new or interesting thought to you from Sunday's message?
2. Would you describe yourself as a very decisive person or not? What situations trigger indecision for you?

START THINKING

1. On Sunday, Steve said that we should try and answer 2 questions when we read the Bible: What did it mean to them? And, what does it mean to us? Are these questions you ask yourself when reading the Bible? What are some of the tools that you use to help you understand the Bible better?
2. Read Matthew 21:28-31. Who do the characters in the parable represent?
One of the key ideas here is that the Father (God) wants His children to be part of the work He is doing in the world (His vineyard). What are some of the ways that you can see God working in your world (work, schools, neighbours, church etc.)?

START SHARING

1. Steve shared 3 possible responses we, as children of God, can have:
 - a) YES ... NO - I'm in, but no action.
 - b) NO ... YES - I'm out, but then a change of heart.
 - c) YES ... YES - I'm in and fully surrendered to You, Lord.
 Which best describes where you're currently at? What 'No's' have you been saying recently to God that should rather be 'Yes'?
2. Read Matthew 21:28-31. Share about a time when you responded "yes" to working with the Father, even though the sacrifice may have been great. How has your life been impacted by saying "yes"?

START PRAYING

We are so grateful that you don't take our No's as the last answer and that you allow us to change our minds. We want to be people of the Yes! Yes! Please change our hearts today so that we can engage with You and what You're doing in the world.

START DOING

What are the "No's" you've been saying to the Father? Spend some time with God, surrender to Him, and take a step forward by saying "yes" to one thing He's put on your heart.

This Sunday, Steve shared a message from Matthew 21:28-32 - the parable of the two sons. This parable is not found in any of the other Gospels.

'What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard."

"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, "I will, sir," but he did not go.

'Which of the two did what his father wanted?'

'The first,' they answered. Matthew 21:28-31

Background

This took place in the last week of Jesus' life. He was in Jerusalem at the temple itself and was being challenged by the religious leaders of the day. They hated Him enough to kill Him. They looked for every opportunity to question, challenge and disagree with Him. They had started the whole conversation by asking: by whose authority are you doing all these things?

Jesus said to them, *'Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. Matthew 21:31-32*

We should try and answer 2 questions when we read the Bible:

1. What did it mean to them?
2. What does it mean to us?

What did it mean to them?

The first son represents the religious leaders Jesus was talking to - professed to love and follow God but was not doing His work.

The second son represents those who didn't claim any faith at first yet had responded to John's (& Jesus') teaching in droves.

What is Jesus teaching us?

1. The Father is at work. He invites us to work with Him.

At that time, most businesses were small family-owned businesses. Children would grow up and learn the skills of their fathers. Adult sons lived close by and worked with their fathers. They would have children, and the cycle would repeat. Peter and Andrew, James and John were in the fishing business.

Jesus borrows this idea (also with the story of the prodigal son - Luke 15)

Jesus said to them, *"My father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."* John 5:17

- **The Father is at work.**

- What work is God busy with?
 - He is Creator & Redeemer (He makes all things. And then He makes them new.)
 - He brings order into chaos (think Genesis 1)
 - He brings hope
 - He rescues
 - He helps
 - He pardons
 - He heals
 - He guides
 - He empowers
 - He teaches
 - He cares
 - He transforms

- **He invites us (His children) to work with Him.**

The best example of this is Jesus Himself: *Jesus said to them, "My father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."* John 5:17

Jesus is the ultimate working Son!

... 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19

The Father extends this invitation to us.

Illustration: Steve Jobs (Apple) and John Sculley (then PepsiCo president) were sitting on a balcony overlooking New York's Central Park. Jobs turned to Sculley and said, "Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life or come with me and change the world?" Sculley said the question landed like "a punch to the gut." Sculley ended up working for Apple.

"Do you want to live for your own small isolated existence for the rest of your life, or do you want to come with me and change the world?"

It implies hard work, sacrifice, laying down your life for His glory and laying down your life for others. But the rewards are out of this world!

To view this through another lens...

In our Purpose series we learned about five big purposes, what God is doing and how we work with Him:

- #1 Christ
- #2 Christlikeness
- #3 Community
- #4 Common Good
- #5 Great Commission

2. What is my response?

This parable is all about the response of the 2 sons:

YES ... NO - I'm in, but no action.

The first son missed the wonder of being able to work with the Father. We need to be careful not to lose the wonder of the Gospel and slip into a sloppy, half-heartedness in our relationship with Him.

Jesus is warning all of us against this response:

- It's not about how you start. It's about how you finish.
- The smallest actions are better than the greatest intentions.

There is a challenge to all of us:

- Maybe before COVID, you had said YES, but then let things slide and are now a subtle 'NO'.
- Some men have stopped leading their families.

NO ...YES - I'm out, but then a change of heart.

Jesus used the example of some of the people that society around them would have considered to be the furthest from God. People who had said a massive 'NO'.

Perhaps you have heaped abuse on others who followed Christ. Maybe you have 'given up on God' because of pain, trauma or unanswerable questions. Maybe you have had a resounding 'No' to working with the Father. It's not too late to change your mind!

YES ... YES - A third response that isn't given in this story, but is perhaps implied. It's Yes, all the way through. This is the response that Christ Himself gave praying in the garden of Gethsemane: *'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'* Matthew 26:26

May we be people of the Yes...Yes. All in. As we journey, we realise there's pain and hardship that comes with the "YES", but we respond as the Son did and come to the Father in a place of full surrender again.