

Mt 21:28-32; Ez 18:25-28; Phil 2:2-11 Change Us [The Two Sons]

Up until your last dying breath...God loves you so much...He gives you the opportunity to change.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (and they saw how much they loved him). Jesus drove out the money changers (and He interfered with their money-making).

I think He pretty much knows they are about to kill him.

But he gives them another chance...the chief priest and elders... a chance to change. That is how much God loves us.

He gives them a parable: A father asks his sons to go work in the vineyard. One says “Yes” but does not obey him. The other says, “no”, but changes his mind, and does obey him.

The religious leaders were like the son who at first said “yes” to God. Because they were so dedicated to their religious practices. But they did not obey God’s commandment for love, compassion, caring and forgiveness.

Whereas tax collectors and prostitutes were like the son who at first said “no.” Because they lived sinful lives. But then they changed, they repented and became His followers.

Let’s face it. There are times when we go back and forth; when we are one son or the other:

We are like the son who at first said yes: On Sunday when we come to mass and we offer our lives as a living sacrifice God. But on Monday we go back to our same old sinful habits.

We are like the son who at first said no, when we sin. But then we change our mind, repent and confess our sins. And we receive the grace to obey and follow Jesus.

Blessed are we! Because up until our last dying breath...God loves us so much...He gives us the opportunity to change. And it’s never too late!

So, let me ask you: Is it better to be like the son who said no, then obeyed; or like the son who said yes, but disobeyed. I say, neither one. Because they both caused their father pain.

Yet, there is a better way: a third son!

And it's never too late to make the change. Change into who? Change into Him! ...the one who said "yes" and obeyed the will of our heavenly Father even unto death!

He is Our Lord and Savior, our closest friend, our deepest love, and our beloved brother, Jesus Christ! Just look at that cross ... aren't you amazed at How much He loves us!

He loves us so much that we have been given a choice. The choice set before us, the choice for our salvation, is the imitation of Him, the imitation of Christ!

That is why St. Paul says to us (second reading): *Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus* (Phil 2:5). Be like Him! ...who said: *Come to me...and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:28-29).

Do you want to know what that looks like? It's up there on that cross! He was always God.

But He loves us so much He emptied Himself of His Divinity and became a human being like us—weak, poor, suffering, and subject to temptation (Phil 2:6-7).

Humble He was...with no pride--so much so, that for Him, your life was more important than His own!

Obedient He was...surrendering completely to the will of God for the sake of our salvation—so much so, that it led to His death on that cross! (Phil 2:8).

So, be like Him! Love like He did by serving anyone in need.

Because like Jesus, we have not been sent into this world to be served but to serve, and to offer our lives as a living sacrifice--for the salvation of others (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Jn 13:1-17).

Be like Him! Stop being selfish. Take the last seat (Lk 14:7-11), because whoever wishes to be great must become a servant for all (Mt 20:26).

Be like Him! *Humbly regard others as more important than [yourself], ... looking out not for [your] own interests, but also for those of others* (Phil 2:3-4)...like He did for us on that cross!

Be like Him! Forgive like He did from that cross: *Father, forgive them, [for] they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34). And to the repentant thief: *today you will be with me in Paradise* (Lk 23:43).

Be like Him! And give, like He did when He gave us His mother: *Woman behold your son* (Jn 19:26); and to us: *Behold, your mother* (Jn 19:27)...

And when He breathed His last, He gave up his spirit (Mt 27:50; Jn 19:30), to whom? To you and me.

Where did that power come from? It was in the love He had for God and for us. Then, with His Spirit and with His powerful love inside of us, can we not do the same? Yes we can!

So, let us pray: Lord Jesus by the power of your grace and your love inside of us, be the change in us.

Change us into You—so we love like You do, we care like You do, we give like You do, and we forgive like you do.

And may we offer our lives to live, serve, and die for others, the way you did for us ... on that cross! All for the glory of God!