

**The “Good Son” Game
Matt 21:23-32
Scripture Ref: Job 38:1-3**

1. Use FB to share prayers and fasting!
2. UPDATE – the outline of Matthew’s Gospel
 - a. We have just finished “the entrance of the King” – Jesus entrance into Jerusalem
 - b. Two blind men – could see better than the religious leaders
 - c. The fig tree – a symbol of Israel
 - d. Self application – ‘drive through Christianity, bearing God fruit.’
3. We are entering the next section of the gospel: “The Rejection and Crucifixion of the King”
 - a. And here is where a ‘reality check’ is going to take place.
 - b. There will be a friction between Jesus and the religious rulers
 - c. There will be some tough truths brought out
 - d. There will be hard-hitting prophecies brought forth
 - e. And the religious rulers will be faced with a choice: Believe Jesus to be who he says He is... or reject him.

23 Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”

4. In other words “Who do you think you are? Coming in here, upsetting our enterprise, running out all the merchants, and now you in our temple, preaching.”
 - a. Now, as the spiritual leaders of Israel, and the guardians of the temple and the law, these men had the right to examine anyone who was teaching in the temple.
 - b. But they were also spiritually accountable to recognize the message and the man:
 - i. Was Jesus ministry from God?
 - ii. Did Jesus words align with scripture?
 - iii. Was He who He said He was?
5. And so they asked the question – a legit question, but with a questionable motive.
 - a. But there is problem when you try and challenge God. Reminds me of Job:

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

Job 38:1-3 NKJV

- b. God asked Job “Were you there when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (Uh... no)**

24 But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.”

- 6. Funny – these guys are trying to trap Jesus, and suddenly they find themselves in a trap.**
 - a. But in truth, it’s only a trap if they refuse to recognize the truth. They could have answered honestly, but doing so would require acknowledging the truth.**
 - b. See Jesus is not playing a word-game with these men, He is using this question to bring them to a place of decision, to answer a simple question:**
 - i. *Did they believe the message of John the Baptist? (simple – yes or no)***
 - c. See – if they believed in John’s message, it would have required that they acknowledge that they were sinners, and they would have repented to the Lord.**
 - i. But they didn’t believe they were sinners, they considered themselves righteous because they obeyed the law.**
 - d. If they believed John’s message, they would have been looking for Jesus, and received Him as John did.**
 - i. But they weren’t interested in the Messiah, they were only interested in their own power and position.**
- 7. These guys remind me of some politicians – I think it’s funny now that emails have surfaced that show “global warming” scientists have manipulated data to support global warming,**
 - a. Some of our politicians are more concerned about how the emails got on the internet than they are concerned about facing the truth that the emails might point to.**
 - b. The religious leader’s problem was not how to answer Jesus question. Their problem was their unwillingness to face the truth of:**
 - i. Who Jesus is**
 - ii. Who sent Him**
 - iii. Whether or not they were going to receive Him as the Messiah.**

- c. **And the sad thing is – *they didn't even see it.* So they took the cowards way out:**

27 So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.” And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

- 8. **Now Jesus could have walked away as they stood there with their mouths hanging open.**
 - a. **But of course, Jesus is not going to leave it at that – He is going to give them three parables to help them see.**
 - b. **A parable about two sons; A parable about some wicked tenant grape farmers; and a parable about a wedding feast.**
 - c. **And in these three parables Jesus will reveal to these men, and to us, some truths about people, and about God.**
 - d. **(We'll look at one today)**

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ 29 He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said to Him, “The first.”

- 9. **What a great example, because this is something that we might see played out in our own homes!**
 - a. **You tell you kids “go take out the trash”, and you get “NO!” (no? Where’s my belt!)**
 - b. **If one of our kids was that blatant about not obeying, we’d be pretty upset. But think about it – at least the kid is being honest.**
 - c. **Sure they are in rebellion – but its honest rebellion! It’s straight up!**
- 10. **Here is a news flash – if you are here today and you are a Christian, that person was YOU!**
 - a. **Because we were ALL in rebellion against God before we came to Christ.**
 - b. **Perhaps you weren’t as blatant as this example, but most of us had some knowledge of God, we just weren’t going to do anything about it. We just said – NO!**
 - c. **Think about it – how many of you were looking for God when you got saved? We didn’t come to God in our righteousness, “*Wow I am really a good person, and so I think I’ll become a Christian!*”**

- d. **NO! We were lost sinners, who God revealed Himself to, and we came to him with repentance, and we received Him, and did the will of the Father.**
- 11. Contrast this with the other parable son – who when his father said “Go take out the trash” and he said “sure” – but never did.**
 - a. **In other words this guy is a poser – he acts obedient, he sounds obedient, but in reality he is more rebellious than his brother.**
 - b. **The first brother eventually obeys, but this guy doesn’t.**
 - c. **The first brother was at least honest about his position, this guy is dishonest about his position.**

Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

- 12. That is the point that Jesus is making in the parable.**
 - a. **The tax collectors (thieves) and harlots, they knew they were sinners.**
 - i. **But they acknowledged it, they repented, and they did the will of the Father: They believed on His Son Jesus Christ.**
 - b. **The religious leaders – the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes:**
 - i. **Outwardly they looked obedient, they sounded obedient “sure dad, I’ll do your will!”**
 - ii. **But inwardly they were rebellious; they were concerned only with their own will, not God’s.**

32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

- 13. This must have stung like salt on an open wound!**
 - a. **But it was a necessary pain, as Jesus was bringing them to choice: *Believe Me to be who he says I am... or reject Me***
 - b. **Jesus is essentially saying to these religiously pious men: You are disobeying your Heavenly Father!**
 - c. **You are saying one thing with your mouth, and another with your actions.**
- 14. And they were, weren’t they: Those self-righteous, pompous, rulers! We knew they were all hypocrites!**
 - a. **Now that we’ve established that, we can all go home, right?**
- 15. But wait – there was something more – oh yes, we’re not supposed to be satisfied with looking at the beam in their eye – we’re supposed to look at the speck in our own eye...**

*First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. **Matt 7:5***

- a. **Maybe I am supposed to examine my own life, and make sure that I am not like the poser son, who on the outside presents the image that “I am serving my father! Doing the will of God! Being obedient!”**
 - b. **But in reality, I am resisting the Father. Resisting His word, resisting His will.**
 - c. **Am I being like the Pharisees and thinking I am fine, it’s those sinners over there, boy they got problems!**
- 16. Last week I challenged you all – let’s pray and fast. But let me go ahead and warn you:**
- a. **If you start fasting and praying, one of the first things that God will do is to start purging your life of things that don’t line up with His word.**
 - b. **You will start being convicted of sin! God will start revealing things in your life that need to change!**
 - c. **Matter of fact, you might even start having some difficulty in your life, as often God allows difficulty into our lives to purge us – because otherwise we wouldn’t let go of some things.**
 - d. **(I know, you thinking “Great, you should have told me that last week” – sorry I forgot!)**
- 17. But here is the thing – God will always purge us before He places us. He will always prepare us before He promotes us.**
- a. **See, sometimes we think we are being used by God, but in reality we haven’t even scratched the surface.**
 - b. **Part of the reason might be that we are playing the “good son” game. We look the part, act the part, but there is resistance in our heart to God.**
 - c. **Something that we don’t want to let go of – and we think it’s something we need to keep, but in reality it is holding us back.**
 - d. **So let God search your heart – let the light in – let Him have access to every part of you – and even do some surgery.**
 - e. **And guarantee you will be glad you did!**

Copyright © 2009 Pastor Clay Ritter. This data file is the sole property of Pastor Clay Ritter. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain this copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Pastor Clay Ritter. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor Clay Ritter, c/o Calvary Chapel of Wilmington, 2831 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington NC, 28412.