

Theme of the Week - The Father's will

Every day of our lives we have to make choices. Sometimes we make the wrong choice and do something we shouldn't. Remember that whenever we have had a change of heart, Jesus is always ready to give us another chance to put things right.

God's kingdom is to be governed by principles that Ezekiel (the 1st reading from Sunday) recognised and in his conversation with the people he is adamant that their choice for good or evil will lead to life or death. Good choices in the past will not negate poor choices of the present. In the second reading on Sunday, Paul speaks of aspects of Christian life and makes a plea for unity as the people strive to emulate Christian principles.

The Gospel today is set in Jerusalem, where Jesus gives another parable in response to the questioning of his authority by the chief priests. This is crisis time for Jesus' ministry and he will enter into conflict with the established religious authorities. Jesus was eliciting an answer from them about the authority of John the Baptist, who not only preached righteousness but lived it. The parable cuts the ground from under their feet. They who saw themselves as the ones with training and scriptural learning, should have known and recognised what is from God, but Jesus is inferring that they are like the second son who says 'yes' but fails to carry out God's will. It is not the conventionally religious who outwardly exhibit right talk and rituals who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who carry out God's will by their actions. Prostitutes and tax collectors are often bracketed together because they were considered 'sinners'. But these are the ones who accepted and believed in Jesus and experienced a change of heart and life.

Jesus' parables are always designed to challenge us to examine our own responses to God. The chief priests to whom this parable was directed were failing to recognise the reality of the situation. Have there been times when you too have been in this position? Times when you have said you were going to do something and not done it? How did you feel in breaking your promise? Have you had experiences of being pressured into agreeing to do something when you would rather have said 'no'? Or failing to do something when you knew that you should have acted? As you consider your response to the demands that being a follower of Jesus calls of you in your day to day experiences, can you identify what were the 'no' moments of the last few days? What were the 'yes' moments? How could you consider changing your negative responses in the coming week? This week, if encountering difficult moments, conversations, struggles with your studies, look to be righteous in your own actions; to truly illustrate 'The Father's Will' and allow others to see the presence of Christ in you.

The Father's will

Weekly Reflections
1st October 2023



A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (21:28-32)

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

Prayer for the Week

Righteous Father, in my wrong decisions you give me forgiveness. Please pour forth your mercy so I too can forgive others. Help me to open my heart so I can make the right decisions and live out your spirit in my own actions.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

Feast Day - St Jerome (342-420)
30th September 2023



Possibly the most famous theologian in Church history. He was baptized in around 365 and became a monk in Aquileia. In 373 he travelled with three companions to Antioch, visiting Athens and many cities in Anatolia on the way. It was here that he reputedly extracted a thorn from a lion's paw, and the beast is said to have remained his faithful companion.

He returned to Rome and was retained as secretary by Pope Damasus I, who instructed him to produce a new Latin translation of the Bible. The resulting manuscript became the Vulgate Bible, the canonical Catholic text still in use today.
He was

Eloquent & Truthful

Day 1

In the last week - can you think of a time where you have made the wrong choice? How did you and others around you feel?

In the Gospel today, Jesus is asking us to examine ourselves in how we come to make our decisions. Why do you think Jesus is always ready to give us another chance when we do something wrong? Think about the Gospel from two weeks ago about forgiveness

Day 2

Jesus refers to John the Baptist as a man not only preaching righteousness but actually living it.

Why do you think Jesus is critical of those who see themselves as scholars of their faith but not ones who truly practice it?

Day 3

During this week be righteous to one another. Allow yourself to do the right thing for others so they can experience Christ through you.