

Religious Education:

Week Beginning: 27th September 2026 Year A:

Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year:

Making Choices

First Reading: *Ezekiel 18:25-28*

It is possible to turn from sin and preserve one's life.

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 25:4-9*

A prayer to God for mercy.

Second Reading: *Philippians 2:1-11* (shorter form Philippians 2:1-5)

Be like Christ who humbled himself and was exalted by God.

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 21:28-32G*

Jesus poses a question to the chief priests and elders on the meaning of obedience.

Introduction:

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.

Sign of the Cross

Dear Lord Jesus help me to find the way to you. Help me choose not bad, but good, as you tell me. Lord I should. Help me do no wrong, but right, shining always with your light. Amen.

Gospel Reading: 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. 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. The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection:

Jesus often uses parables to respond to queries from the temple leadership, and we see this in Matthew 21. The chief priests and elders question Jesus' authority, and Jesus responds with a parable about two sons. The father asks his sons to go to the vineyard and work. The first son says "no" - but eventually changes his mind and goes. The second son says "yes" - but never goes to work in the vineyard.

Jesus compares the two sons to the tax collectors and prostitutes, on the one hand, and the chief priests and elders, on the other hand. The ones most expected to understand and do God's will, the religious leadership, fail. The ones least expected to understand and do God's will, the ones most culturally despised, do the will of God. Actions speak louder than words.

Jesus asks, "What does it mean to say yes to God?" Saying "yes" is not the same as doing God's will. Jesus reminds us that words alone are not enough. The second son says all the right things: "Yes, sir," but then does nothing.

Similarly, we may also become very good at saying the right things to God without living them. We can say: "I believe in love," but not love. We can say: "I believe in justice," but not practice justice. We can say: "I follow Jesus," but not follow him. True obedience requires action and a humble heart, not just empty religious words.

The vineyard is not a place of words but a place of work. It is a place where faith becomes visible. The first son says "no", but then changes his mind and heart, and turns around. This shows that there is hope for all of us: Because many of us have also said "no" to God at some point. Maybe we have resisted something God was asking us to do. Maybe we have been afraid or angry. Maybe God called us toward justice, but justice was inconvenient, and we refused. But the good news of this parable is that our first answer does not have to be our final answer. We can change and turn around as grace gives us another opportunity.

Jesus surprises us with who enters the kingdom. Jesus says: "The tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you." These were people whom respectable religious society had pushed to the margins as they were considered sinners and outsiders. But they heard, and they changed direction.

The religious people who thought they already had the right answers were refusing to go into the vineyard. The people we think are far from God may actually be closer to God than we imagine. The people who think they are closest to God may discover that they have stopped listening. It is possible to become so certain we are right that we no longer hear God's invitation. We

can become so comfortable with our theology that we stop being transformed by the gospel.

God's invitation comes to us in the present, as the vineyard is the world in which we live. It is our neighbourhood, our workplace, our family, our community, and the Earth. Jesus tells us: go feed someone, go stand beside someone who has been pushed aside, go work for justice, go care for creation, go build community, and go tell someone that they are beloved.

Faith must become embodied. Jesus tells us to love God and love our neighbour, which is to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the vulnerable, make peace, and love our enemies, Faith is action, as God is not simply interested in what we say but in what we do.

Prayer:

Lord, when I choose the way to go, help me choose the good way. When I choose the things to say, help me say what you'd say. Help me always to do what is right; keep me always in your sight. Amen.

