

# A Tale of Two Sons



Jesus has been called the Master Teacher, for He was omniscient (had all knowledge) and exercised divine wisdom (God's wisdom—ultimate wisdom). In His teachings He often used parables to impart wisdom and truth to His hearers. In Matthew 21:28-31 Jesus used a tale of two sons to teach a powerful truth. The two sons' father came to the first son and said, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." The son answered, "I will not." But afterward he repented and went (KJV). The father came to the second son and said the same to him. This son said, "I go." But he did not go. Jesus asked the chief priests and elders, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" They answered, "The first." Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

Why? Why were publicans and harlots going into the kingdom of God before the religious leaders of God's people? The chief priests and elders had dedicated themselves to studying the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. They spent time fasting and praying. They ritually practiced giving alms to the poor. They served at the temple and led the people in worship to God. So why would they not go into the kingdom before these sinners?

In Jesus' "tale of two sons" we notice first that both sons were sinners; they both did wrong by not respecting their father's word. The first son boldly refused his father's command. The second son lied to his father when he said he would go and work in the field but did not.

Secondly, the son who lied did not regret his decision, nor did he repent and go and ask forgiveness of his Father, nor did he go and work in the field. This is not only lying, but also rebellion.

The first son was different. Although he had refused his father's command, he later felt remorse. This remorse brought a change in his heart which, in turn, brought about a change in his actions. He went to work in his father's field. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." The first son had a godly sorrow that led to his repentance which led to his being vindicated of his sin. The second son did not have a heart that was touched by godly sorrow, neither did he repent.

Although they were sinners, the publicans and harlots had a heart touched by regret that led them to repentance. The chief priests and elders did not. The lesson for people of this age is that there is hope for sinners who repent.

Men and women must not be blinded by selfishness, addiction, shame, tradition, power, rebellion and all other tricks of Satan that stand in the way of repentance. If a person desires to be saved then he or she must have a heart that can be touched by godly sorrow.

Which of the two sons are you like? Is your heart touched by the words of your heavenly Father? Will His words lead to sorrow that will lead to a change in action?