

Parable of the Two Sons

(Matthew 21:28-32)

"Actions Speak Louder than Words"

Background:

A man has two sons, whom he asks to work on his vineyard. The first says he will not, but later changes his mind and goes to work. The second says he will work, but does not. The first son is the one that did the father's will.

Key characters and elements:

- **Man (Father).** He appears incidental to the story. Maybe represents God. He does ask and provide the opportunity for BOTH sons to work.
- **Vineyard.** May represent the "world" – people and their needs.
- **First Son.** Represents the tax collectors and prostitutes (i.e. "sinners"). He at first rejects the invitation of the father, but later changes his mind (repents) and does end up obeying and working. Representative of all us sinners who repent and are saved. [Also note that the son was willing to go into the "vineyard" and do the work needed; the son exhibited trust, obedience and caring].
- **Second Son.** Represents the hypocritical religious leaders (i.e. chief priest, elders, Pharisees). This son talked a good game ("I will sir") but did not follow through and obey. These religious leaders had an outward show of piety and compliance, but inwardly refused to accept and obey the words of Jesus and the Father (see Matthew 23:1-7). Representative of all hypocrites who say the right things but do not do them.

Key Learning:

- Actions do speak louder than words. Repentance and obedience to our loving Heavenly Father and His Son are essential for salvation, growth and relationship.

Case Study:

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector (Luke 19: 1-9)

Other Relevant Scriptures:

James 1:22 – Do not merely be hearers of God's word but be **doers**

I Samuel 15:22 - "... to obey is better than sacrifice ..."

John 15:24 - "You are my friends if you do what I command"

Ezek 33:31-32 – Israelites condemned for hearing God's words but not putting them into practice, and condemned for expressing devotion with their mouths but having greedy hearts