

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

26th Sunday Year A

Reading 1 Ez 18:25-28

Thus says the LORD:

You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair? When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed, he does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Reading 2 Phil 2:1-11

Brothers and sisters:

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others.

Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the

Reflection Process / Questions

- **10 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
 - **10 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
 - **10 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
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- Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet with his people in exile in Babylon. Jewish people had a deep sense that sins of their ancestors had caused their current situation (in exile away from Home and their sacred Temple in Jerusalem). It was easy for them to 'blame' others for their current situation. They 'blamed' God that this exile was 'unfair'. Ezekiel invites them to take personal responsibility for 'sin'. Turn to virtue, do what is right and just. This is the way forward. God will teach us and lead us home. Is there an attitude in your life of 'blame' rather than taking 'responsibility'? Blame leads to death. Responsibility leads to life. What change do you need to make?
 - St Paul invites disciples to have the one essential attitude that will maintain unity: humility. Giving up an attitude of having special rights. Power. Influence. Can you think of a situation in which being 'humble' would have saved a meeting, argument, relationship. How could you become more 'humble'?

earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Mt 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not, ' but afterwards changed his mind and went.

The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir, 'but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?" They answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."



"Which of the two did the will of his father?" Matthew 21:31

- Jesus has now arrived in Jerusalem. Angry at his emptying of the Temple, the religious leaders challenge his actions and authority to teach. Jesus responds. Pious words and lip-service is easy. To be true children of God requires actions of doing the will of the Father. In your own self assessment, how large is the gap between your profession of faith and the practice of your faith? In what area of your life is more 'action' required? What would motivate you to action?

- Anyone can talk holiness, but it is quite another thing to live it. Consider someone in your life who 'talks the talk and walks the walk' of their christian belief. How do they inspire your journey? How could you follow their example?

- Both sons responses hurt the Father. No-one here is perfect. Jesus understands a priority for Jewish people is to show 'honor'. The son who said 'Yes, sir' was honorable in front of the Father but it was soon revealed as empty and meaningless. Honor is shown ultimately in real obedience. What will it mean for you to 'walk the talk' in obedience this week? Consider writing it down.

- A requirement for 'tax collectors' to be truly repentant and 'right with God' was to repay money to those who had been 'over-taxed'. However it was impossible for them to know and remember all the people they had wrongly taxed. Tax collectors felt helpless and stuck in a situation of never feeling they could be forgiven by God. Jesus reveals this is not the case. God welcomes those who turn to him. Do you know someone who needs help to hope and believe in God's forgiveness? Consider praying a special prayer for them.

- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?