

Matthew 21:23-32 (MSG)

Then he was back in the Temple, teaching. The high priests and leaders of the people came up and demanded, “Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to teach here?”

Jesus responded, “First let me ask you a question. You answer my question and I’ll answer yours. About the baptism of John—who authorized it: heaven or humans?”

They were on the spot and knew it. They pulled back into a huddle and whispered, “If we say ‘heaven,’ he’ll ask us why we didn’t believe him; if we say ‘humans,’ we’re up against it with the people because they all hold John up as a prophet.” They decided to concede that round to Jesus. “We don’t know,” they answered.

Jesus said, “Then neither will I answer your question.

“Tell me what you think of this story: A man had two sons. He went up to the first and said, ‘Son, go out for the day and work in the vineyard.’

“The son answered, ‘I don’t want to.’ Later on he thought better of it and went.

“The father gave the same command to the second son. He answered, ‘Sure, glad to.’ But he never went.

“Which of the two sons did what the father asked?”

They said, “The first.”

Jesus said, “Yes, and I tell you that crooks and whores are going to precede you into God’s kingdom. John came to you showing you the right road. You turned up your noses at him, but the crooks and whores believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, you didn’t care enough to change and believe him.

For Reflection and Prayer:

Listening with the “ear of your heart”, was there a word, phrase or image which caught your attention you as you listened to or slowly read the text? Gently repeat the word or phrase, giving it room to settle deeply in your heart.

Reflect on what you heard. Relish the words. Notice how the word or words affected you. You might choose to journal about what you heard.

Respond to what you heard and reflected on in your prayer with Jesus. Is there a prayer of which rises within you? Does he have more to say to you?

Rest in God as you simply be and entrust yourself to God in the quiet.