

# Homily for the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 26-27, 2020

Readings: Ezekiel 18:25-28; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32

Preacher: Teryle Watson

My late husband Bill had two favorite one-liners that remind me of the story of the two brothers in the Good News for today.

The first saying was, "talk is cheap," and the second bit of wisdom was, "the proof is in the pudding."

Both statements remind us that our words must be supported by action, if we are to have any credibility. We must walk the talk and talk the walk. So many situations in life challenge our capacity to be obedient. This state of being subject to the service of others comes from the Latin word, "*obedire*" or "*oboedire*."

To be obedient is to accept the invitation to pay attention, to lean into the verbal cues, sights, social needs and cries of the earth and her inhabitants. Obedience demands that we make a conscious decision to give primacy with all of our senses to the needs of the other. It is a totally selfless state of being made complex by our human nature.

I am able to see myself in each of the sons. The first son abruptly refuses the wishes of his father. After some thought, he changes his mind and does the labor.

On any given day there are people, places and things that call for my attention. I regret that sometimes I default to selective hearing or even worse, abruptly answer in the negative.

Thankfully, God has not given up on me; the Spirit continues to speak and I respond to the cry. Hebrews 3:15 pushes me: "If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts."

My stubborn, frail humanity too often shifts into neutral instead of into action!

Accepting the invitation to truly listen is so liberating. Walking the Word makes the hardest task joyful. Communion with the Will of God does indeed make the yoke easy and the burden light. A great poetic motivator for me is found in Psalm 40: "To do your will, oh my God, is my delight and your law is within my heart."

The second son is the more problematic. This son demonstrates the cunning facade when our word is given without any intention of following through on the promise. When we walk away from unpleasant situations, uncomfortable settings and environments, we turn our promise into a hurtful lie.

The second son artfully and politely responds in the affirmative. This is deceitful and destructive behavior. In our daily lives it is crushing to the most vulnerable within the Body of Christ. Lies and false promises are too often the food shoved down the throats of the most marginalized amongst us.

This second son roams about the earth today with unkept promises and lies. His power has eroded governments, educational structures, poisoned the earth and sea and cast aside young and old based on their ethnicity and economic weakness. The falsehood has riddled both the sacred and secular.

Our streets are imploding, innocents are dying and our moral compass is confused. Good and just people are at increased peril.

Talk is cheap and there is no pudding.

Those of us who claim to know the Lord must be brave enough to live the Gospel out loud. We must hear and see the face and voice of God everywhere. We must joyfully and courageously walk the talk and talk the walk. We must accept that the task is filled with struggle.

The Good News is that over two thousand years ago a young Jewish rebel prayed alone in a garden. He begged His Father to remove the Cup of Salvation that was predestined to bring Him death so that death would be no more. His agreement did not come easily. In that night of wonder as Jesus claimed his Divinity and Priesthood, He showed us how to live authentically in the Word. We can be alone, broken, fear filled and abandoned but we know that when we agree to labor in the field for our Father we become richly blessed by the mighty Spirit of the Living God. We are Resurrection people...blessed, broken and given to respond to the needs of this temporal life as we wait for the Promise of Life Eternal.