

Two Sons

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Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 30,

Jesus loved to teach in parables. He caught the attention of the people. He got their interest and taught wonderful lessons.

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" Matthew 21:28-31.

Unfortunately there were mistakes in both of those sons. The first son who said he wouldn't go made a sad mistake. Fortunately he repented later and went. That is the thing Jesus is getting at. If we have made a wrong decision, thank God, we can repent, turn back, and make the right decision. But the best thing is not to make the wrong decision in the first place. Then the second son said he would go, but the time came for work and he wasn't there. His words and actions contradicted each other.

This is how we respond to the invitations of heaven to share with our Lord in His work. Jesus is looking for people who need to be told only once, and who will respond immediately, and will stick to what they have promised to do. What a world of energy could be used in other directions if all the children of God would simply do what we have said. We are in an ingathering campaign. Many dollars are being used to merely get people to do ingathering. It would be interesting if we could have a chart of what it cost to raise it, but that chart will not be made.

On the Day of Pentecost Peter preached a sermon under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The multitude were convicted and cried out, What shall we do? Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of your their sins and they would receive the Holy Spirit. They received his word gladly. They were baptized, and three thousand came in that day.

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their

possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" Acts 2:42-45.

Do you think in order to get that wonderful result of money coming in they had to have a supper and sell tickets? No. Those people had been converted. And as sure as the love of God gets into the heart money, gifts, service begins to shell out. There is a response to love. And it doesn't have to be milked out or pumped out. It doesn't have to be promoted, and it doesn't have to be bought. We don't have to trade ice-cream, cake, and pie for money for missions. Neither do we have to have praise and honor.

The question of motivation is interesting. There are various ways to get water. When we first came here to Wildwood, just below the baptistery was an old pump. The water was good. But if you wanted water you had to pump. Quite often you had to prime the pump. Some people are like that. But none of the people of the Day of Pentecost were like that. They were like the water we get up in the hallow from the spring. You go up there and water is flowing out of the rock all the time. Nobody has to pump it. Nobody has to give it a pep talk. Nobody has to come around and say, Can't you go a little better? No. It flows night and day. What causes it to do that? Gravity. And what gravity does for the flowing spring the love of God does for the Christian.

What does it take to get us to do something? What does it take to get us to pledge, to promise, to enlist, to start out? And what does it take to get us to deliver? This second son thought enough of his father, and wanted to be friendly, that he raised his hand and said, I will. But he wasn't there. I think it is a wonderful thing that when ingathering comes around all we need to know is that it is time for ingathering. The money comes because we love Jesus, love His church, and love the poor, needy people in the mission fields. And we are in the habit of responding to the influences of the Spirit of God without pressure.

I think we make a mistake in substituting pressure for the holy, sweet love. The times our faith manifests itself are the times when we are in an experience where someone thinks that unless we apply pressure we are going to fail to reach a certain objective. Paul said the love of Christ springs up. I am using ingathering as an illustration because it is currently with us. But you will miss my point entirely if you think my study is ingathering. The purpose of this study is to get you and me to analyze our hearts and motives, and to dig down deep in thinking through what gets us to move.

Someone was telling me that when they were children their father never raised his voice in angry or emphasis. If he had something he needed to emphasize to his children he lowered his voice. If we have a lot of noise around sometimes we don't hear the still, small voice. It was after the earthquake and the wind and the fire had expended that God spoke to Elijah in the mouth of the cave at Horeb in a still, small voice. I think it is a wonderful thing that we instinctively and automatically tune in on heaven's radio and say, Lord, what will You have me to do. And finding out what He wants us to do we go out and do it whether anyone asks us about it or not.

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" Acts 4:23,31-35.

Do you want the time to come when the elders and the ministry must spend their time largely going about milking the cows? I don't think there is a soul who wants that. God has something better than that. There are times when God has to send the church officers to people, not because God is short on money, but because unless someone came and made the appeal their selfishness would keep them asleep. So let no one criticize some church officer or minister because he comes. He may be doing his duty. He may be trying to awaken the flock. But my point is that if we are awake we will not have to wait for that kind of thing.

The second boy raised his hand, but the subscription for the *Review and Herald* never got in. He never put down the money. He never gave his name. And I might go on with other illustrations. We as a people are noted with many campaigns and many appeals. Some people can't keep up with them all. It would be a good thing to pray about it, and find out which one God wants you to engage in.

I was talking to one of our brethren in the General Conference about this problem. I was pleased with his response. He made it clear that neither the Lord or the brethren expected everybody to engage in every activity that is promoted. That is reasonable. Suppose we go into a cafeteria. We get our tray and start down the line. We see two soups and a half a dozen salads, two or three vegetables and several deserts. Is it our business to get everything on our tray? No. Those who eat in cafeterias learn to select. And in the total appeals of the year there are many kinds of activities. The Lord expects as each is presented we will pray that God will guide us. God lays the burden on some.

Here on this campus we have a good many activities. I am sure there are men who would like to be working on the chapel every day whose duties are on the farm or the sanitarium or the office. Everyone of us as we fulfill our part in the total program are helping to build the chapel as truly as the men who are driving the nails. So in the church as a whole. We can't all be nurses, teachers, ministers, or Bible workers. We can't all of us be everything. We can't all sing tenor or base. Some

can't sing either one. But I am so glad that there is a place for everyone in God's program.

The father said to the first son, Go work in my vineyard. The son knew what his father wanted him to do. He said, No, I won't go. He turned down what his father wanted him to do. If God has laid a burden upon you for some big or little thing you know He wanted you to do, then I beg you to follow the example of that first son, for after a period he repented. He was sorry enough to change his mind and attitude. Somewhere in the day we see that son out there in the vineyard doing exactly what his father told him to do.

The second boy didn't want to make any trouble. He wanted everyone to feel good. So when the invitation came he said he would go. Perhaps he had seen his brother's defiance. Perhaps he has seen how bad it made his father feel. I will make him feel good. I will tell him I will go. How many grapes did he pick? Not a one.

The first thing is to hear the voice of God. The second thing is to respond and say, I go. The third thing is to carry through. There is a refreshing and relaxing thing to all this.

God has made no one the judge of another man's duty. Every duty that is yours God will make clear to you, if you really want to know.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" Romans 14:4,10,12.

We are God's servants. We are all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. I think there are two things we sometimes do that discourage people. One is being too quick to decide what other people ought to do. We need to be careful about that. When you are invited to do something in God's work there is nothing wrong in saying, Let me pray over it. Prayer is heaven's opportunity to lead our minds in the channel of duty. But if you accept a responsibility, then do what? Carry it through.

Children are sometimes talked to by parents and uncles and aunts and grandparents. They have so many people telling them what to do that they become confused.

Did the second son make a vow? Yes. It would be better if he hadn't vowed. But once we do we ought to carry it through. Let's be careful before we make another vow. The lesson is never to make another vow. The Bible says vow and pay. But if we would hold ourselves to the pledges we make of service we would get into the habit of finding out for sure what God wants us to do before we make any commitments.

Some day in our new chapel we will be engaged in more and larger evangelistic endeavors. It will call for more participation, time, effort, prayer, and money. I lay it on our hearts, let us get into the habit of responding to gentle appeals of the Spirit. Let us not make it necessary for God to thunder at us. Let us not make it necessary for God's servants to spend their time pushing or dragging us in order to get action. Let us rejoice in our privilege as blood-bought souls to be like the flowing spring, loving to do the thing that is needed, and doing the thing that love invites us to do.

The daily period at Calvary will help us. This is the spring from which true love flows, and this is what counts to God.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7.

What does purpose mean? Plan. Decide. Not grudgingly or of necessity. How will it get done then if I don't do it? God will find someone else. Dare we say, Lord, find someone else. I don't feel like working in the vineyard. Oh, no. Not if we are looking at Calvary. Think what it cost our Savior to hang there. And this is what should move us. Wouldn't it be awful if it would take some candy to get us to work for God? Some pie? Some ice-cream to help us to carry the cross? Wouldn't it be too bad if it would take some lovely music or flowers? I would hate to think it would take music or flowers or honor or position or anything to move us except the love of Jesus on Calvary.

The next verse is so precious:

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" 2 Corinthians 9:8.

A person came up after the meeting a few weeks ago and told an interesting experience. Some friends asked him how he could give so much and still seem to have all he had. He said, All I know is that as I shovel it out God shovels it in. And God has a bigger shovel than I do.

It is amazing what can happen with these little hands if we will just keep using them for God. The spring up in the hollow is not a very big stream. It is about an inch. Yet it is supplying water for eight or ten families. Why? It keeps coming all the time. God has pledged His word that if we will keep the channels open He will keep us supplied.

The first son said he wouldn't go, but afterward he repented and went. The second one said he would go, but he didn't go. Which one of those two boys does Jesus want us to be like? Neither one. The second was long on fault. The first one finally came through, but he had to have a change of mind. So tonight Jesus is inviting us to get into the habit of responding at once. If Elder Harry Christman were here tonight he would say, With acrobatic alacrity.

That's it. Immediate response when the Lord moves us. That means we will need to be careful how we take on burdens the Lord hasn't given us. That means we will have to weight carefully every invitation. That means that once we have accepted a responsibility, we should carry it through. And it means that the great motive that is moving us in all this is love. The love of Jesus constraineth us.

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W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org