



THE SABBATH CIRCLES HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Unit Theme: Illumination of mind and heart

Lesson connected to Sunday, March 29, 2020

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:28-32

Key Verse: "What do you think?" Matthew 21:28a

Contexts of the Scripture:

- As we have discovered in previous lessons, Matthew is one of the three synoptic gospels meaning it offers a summary of Jesus' life, ministry and teachings. It was written most likely between 80-90CE by a literate, multilingual Israelite. Thus it was composed roughly 50 years after Jesus' death on the cross.
- This story is the first of several parables Jesus told in an attempt to explain God and God's realm which he refers to as the kingdom of heaven. It is important to understand that for Jesus this refers not to the afterlife but life in the here and now.
- This parable is called the "parable of the two sons." Their actions in the story reveal what it means to be a righteous person or someone who lives life in accordance with God's will.
- This parable is a veiled accusation of the Pharisees and Sadducees who were considered the most educated and devoted of the Temple officials.

Questions to go deeper:

- Jesus begins this parable with the question, "what do you think?" Why does he do that?
- Read the parable carefully. On a separate piece of paper, write down what each son does in response to the father's request to go into the vineyard to work. How are the responses different?
- At the end of the parable, Jesus asks his audience, who they think did as the father asked. Who do you think did? Why?
- Read Jesus' answer to them. It's pretty harsh! Why??
- The John he mentions is John the Baptist. What is his point in mentioning John in connection with tax collectors and prostitutes?
- Of what is Jesus accusing the Pharisees and Sadducees to whom this parable was directed?

Activity possibilities:

- **Family activities:**
 - Where would this fall on the bible timeline? Hint: Check out the context info above!

- How do you generally respond when someone prefaces a story with the question, “what do you think?” Does this question offer you any hints or clues about the story that follows? Why or why not?
 - Have you had an experience of someone asking you what you think about something, and then using your response to point out something unpleasant about you? What was the experience? How did you respond? Why do you think Jesus did this in this case?
 - In the midst of the Covid-19 shut-down and the radical changes it is bringing to daily life, has your family ever sat down to talk about what everyone is thinking about all that is happening? If you have, what was the result? If you haven’t, is this something you might consider doing? Check out this link to the Southern New England Conference UCC for a list of helpful resources for talking with children and youth about the Covid-19 situation: <https://www.sneucc.org/resources-for-children-youth-and-families>
- **Activities for children and youth during Covid-19 situation:**
 - Check out this link to find a valuable resource for families to use in caring for one another while social distancing at home.
<https://www.sneucc.org/files/websites/sne/Self+Care+at+Home+TO+PR+INT.pdf>

Remember, Rev. Ruth is always happy to answer your questions and help you find more information on anything in the Bible that interests you! Catch up with her through the church or come to the Savoy Bookstore and Café any Thursday afternoon between 2-4pm.