

Daily Reflections

ADVENT

The Divine Intervention

December 13, 2016

Scripture

Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the 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.'

The son said in reply, 'I will not,'

but afterwards he 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.”

Our Scripture Reflection

How embarrassing it must have been for those self-righteous religious leaders to have the truth about themselves exposed publicly by means of a parable. But we must remember, Our Lord was not about destroying souls, but rather, saving the souls of the lost children of the House of Israel. He was trying to unclog their hardened hearts. They were just like the second son. Oh, they certainly seemed to be obeying their Heavenly Father by following the commandments, but they did so as "stage actors" or as Jesus says, "hypocrites." The outcast Gentiles were symbolized by the second son. Yes, by their sinful lifestyle they embodied a resounding NO to the Father. However, when Jesus came along many of them turned to Him. An Advent thought: Even though you have turned away from the Father, He is sending Emmanuel to bring you back. Are you ready?

Food for your Journey

"Why don't you come to church with us?" my landlords asked me practically every time I saw them.

For a long time, I would smile and thank this nice, elderly couple for the invitation, and then come up with an excuse. I had seldom attended church since I left home for college, and I preferred to spend my Sundays doing an amateur radio broadcast and going horseback riding in the Hollywood Hills.

I had gone into business in Hollywood, California, in the 1940s. And this godly couple, who must have been in their 80's, were reaching out to me in probably the only way they knew. They didn't know that their feeble efforts would one day result in my receiving Christ. Their obedience in persisting with a young man from Oklahoma became one of the links to my knowing God in a personal way

In all of my millions of miles of travel to most major countries of the world during the last 49 years, I have never met a happy disobedient Christian, nor have I met an unhappy trusting, obedient Christian, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

-Bill Bright, "Living daily in God's will," *The Christian and Obedience*, Ccci.org.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Forgive me for my stubbornness and turn my wayward heart back to You where I am certain to find the Peace this world can never give. Amen.