

2) It's A Way of _____

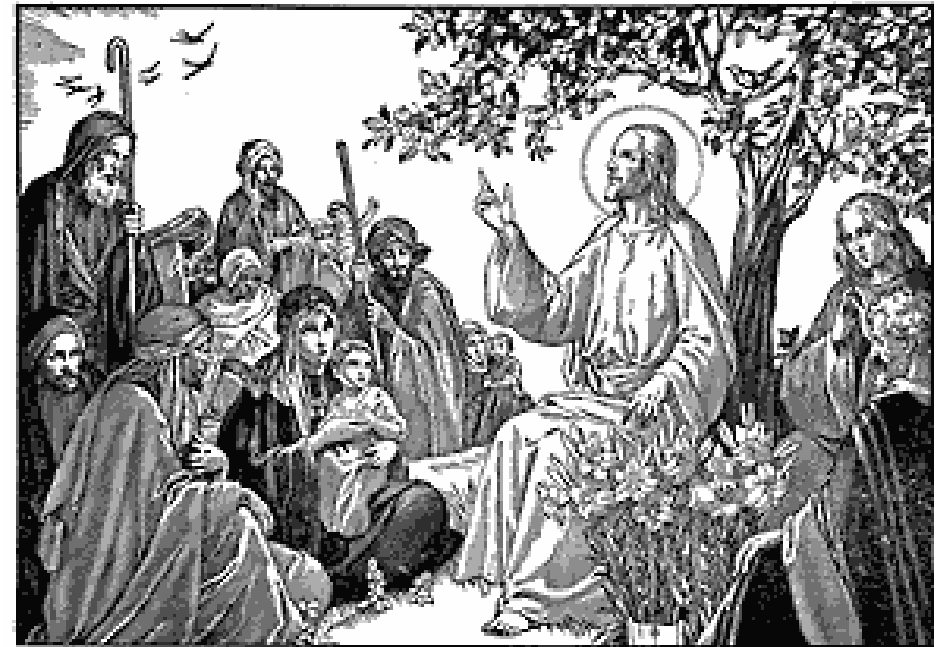
Which of the two sons did what the father wanted?

What does it mean to work in the vineyard, to live in the way of righteousness?

- *“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent” (John 6:29).*
- *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4).*

What does this look like in my life today?

- *“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).*
- *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5).*



HEALING miracle
SPIRIT doing
community refresh
SEED HEARING
grace
GROWING

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

SEPTEMBER 21, 2008



TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH
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**LET ME TELL YOU A STORY
ABOUT... OBEDIENCE**

Good morning!

So which is better: Saying you are going to do something and then not doing it, or saying you aren't going to do something and then doing it anyway? For many things, these issues are inconsequential. In God's kingdom work, it is very different. Enjoy Jesus' story today and its application as he speaks to obedience in God's kingdom.
God bless our worship of him this morning!

Opening Song..... "Come, Holy Ghost, God And Lord"
Christian Worship Hymn 176

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!
May all your graces be outpoured
On each believer's mind and heart;
Your fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of your light
In holy faith your church unite
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue;
This to your praise, O Lord our God,
be sung:
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Come, holy Light, Guide divine,
And cause the Word of life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call him Father with delight.
From ev'ry error keep us free;
Let none but Christ our Master be
That we in living faith abide,
In him, our Lord, with all our might
confide.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Continued on next page

**MESSAGE NOTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2008**

"FOLLOW THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!"

Why did Jesus tell the Parable of the Two Sons? What was its setting?

READ Matthew 21:28-32

1) It's A Way of _____

Why were the tax collectors and prostitutes leading the way into heaven?

- *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:3).*
- *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*
- *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).*

Why were the religious leaders not the leaders into heaven?

In what ways do we have the same self-righteous attitude in our hearts?

Where do we find the answer to our self-righteousness?

Welcome to Tree of Life!

The members of Tree of Life extend to you a hearty welcome! We are a congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS: www.wels.net).

As congregation of this synod we are striving to be a family where God is glorified and his saving message is shared with all people.

We don't claim to be the only saving church, but we do strive to preserve and pass on the truth as it's found in the Bible. We at Tree of Life believe and teach that...

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, with no mistakes and no errors, his unchanging message to all people of all times: **"Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)**
2. God created people holy and without sin, but by their own choice they disobeyed God and brought sin upon the whole human race: **"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)**
3. The final result of sin is not only the end of our earthly life, but eternal death and separation from God in the agony of hell:
"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)
4. The main and central message of the Bible is the gospel - the good news that:
"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but has eternal life." (John 3:16)
5. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life in the place of every human being, and Jesus suffered the punishment of hell for the whole human race when he died on the cross: **"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)**
6. God the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens saving faith in Jesus Christ through the message about him in the Bible, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper:
"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the words of Christ." (Romans 10:17)
7. Christians do good works, not in order to earn a place in heaven, but out of love and thanks to God who has already given them eternal life as a free gift through Jesus: **"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." (Psalm 119:32)**
8. Christians will want to gather together regularly around the Word of God for the strengthening of their own trust in Jesus and for encouraging each other in the faith: **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the (final) Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)**
9. Christians want to carry out the Lord's great commission to spread the good news about Jesus to others: **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15)**
10. When the Lord returns in judgment on the last day, he will raise all the dead and give the full glory of everlasting life in heaven to all who trusted in him as Savior:
"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)

We invite you to worship with us again and we sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Come, holy Fire, Comfort true;
Grant us the will your work to do
And in your service to abide;
Let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by your pow'r prepare each heart,
And to our weakness strength impart
That bravely here we may contend,
Through life and death to you, our Lord, ascend.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

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Service of Word and Sacrament *Christian Worship page 26*

STAND

M: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Prayer and Praise “Lord, Have Mercy”
Christian Worship page 27

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: *(sing)* **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: *(sing)* **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: *(sing)* **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C: *(sing)* **Amen.**

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious: his name is worthy of praise.

“O Lord, Our Lord” *Christian Worship page 28*

O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.
Al-might-y God, mer-ci-ful Father,
you crown our life with your love.

You take a-way our sin; you com-fort our spir-it;
you make us pure and ho-ly in your sight.
You did not spare your on-ly Son, but gave him up for us all.
O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.

O Lord, let this your little flock,
Your name alone confessing,
Continue in your loving care,
True unity possessing.
Your sacraments, O Lord, And your saving Word
To us e'er pure retain. Grant that they may remain
Our only strength and comfort.

Help us to serve you evermore
With hearts both pure and lowly.
And may your Word, that light divine,
Shine on in splendor holy
That we repentance show, In faith ever grow.
The pow'r of sin destroy And evils that annoy.
Oh, make us faithful Christians.

And for your gospel let us dare
To sacrifice all treasure;
Teach us to bear your blessed cross,
To find in you all pleasure.
Oh, grant us steadfastness In joy and distress.
Lord, for your mercy's sake, Let us by grace partake
Of endless joy and glory.

Text, Tune, Setting: public domain.

“Thank The Lord” *Christian Worship page 36*

Thank the Lord and sing his praise.
Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.

Let all who seek the Lord re-joice
and proud-ly bear his name.

He re-news his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth
in joy with shouts of thanks-giv-ing.

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

BLESSING

Christian Worship page 37

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: *(sung)* Amen. Amen. Amen.

Closing Hymn “Lord Jesus Christ, The Church's Head”

Christian Worship Hymn 536

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head,
You are her one foundation.

In you she trusts, before you bows,
And waits for your salvation.

Built on this rock secure, Your Church shall endure
Though all the world decay And all things pass away.

Oh, hear, oh, hear us, Jesus!

Continued on next page

O Son of God, e-ter-nal Word of the Fa-ther,
you came to live with us;
you made your Fa-ther known;
you washed us from our sins in your own blood.

You are the King of glo-ry; you are the Lord!

O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

Mercifully grant, O God, that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, for without your help we are unable to please you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(spoken)* AMEN.

BE SEATED

FIRST LESSON

EZEKIEL 18:1-4, 25-32

“God judges each person justly.”

The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: ”“The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”?

³“As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. ⁴For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. ²⁷But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

Continued on next page

³⁰ “Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

PSALM OF THE DAY

PSALM 25 *Christian Worship page 74*

Refrain: *To you, O Lord, I lift my soul;
 in you I trust, my God.*

*To you, O Lord, I lift `up my soul;**
in you I trust, `O my God.

*Remember, O Lord, your great mer`cy and love,**
for they are `from of old.

*Remember not the sins of my youth and my re`bellious ways;**
according to your love remember me,
for you are `good, O Lord.

Refrain

*Turn to me and be gra`cious to me,**
for I am lonely and af`flicted.

*Look upon my affliction and `my distress**
and take away `all my sins.

*Guard my life and `rescue me,**
for I take re`fuge in you.

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen***

Refrain

“Holy, Holy, Holy” *Christian Worship page 34*

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo-ry.

You are my God, and I will ex-alt you.
I will give you thanks, for you have be-come my sal-va-tion.

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo-ry.

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, when ever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: *(sing)* **Amen.**

“O Christ, Lamb Of God” *Christian Worship page 35*

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

A-men.

BE SEATED

DISTRIBUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and forever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

The Celebration of Holy Communion*Christian Worship* pages 33-36



At Tree of Life, we desire to have all commune with us at the Lord's Table. However, since the Scripture encourages us to "recognize the body and blood of the Lord," "examine ourselves," and join together as "one body," we ask those who are visiting with us this morning to take the time to understand these teachings and establish a unity of beliefs with us before partaking of this act of fellowship. By this practice of close communion, we are in no way judging your personal faith and relationship with Jesus, we just ask for an opportunity for us to share our beliefs with you so that together we can make a true expression of oneness at the Lord's Table.

M: The Lord be with you.

C: *(sing)* **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: *(sing)* **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: *(sing)* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

SECOND LESSON PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

"Jesus didn't just talk a good game, he humbly served us."

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn "Love Divine, All Love Excelling"
Christian Worship Hymn 365

Love divine, all love excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down,
Fix in us your humble dwelling, All your faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, you are all compassion, Boundless mercy from above.
Visit us with benediction; Comfort us with heav'nly love.

Take away our love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.
We would ever seek your blessing, Serve you as your hosts above,
Pray and praise you without ceasing, Glory in your perfect love.

Sanctify your new creation; Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us trust your great salvation, Won for us on Calvary,
Till we lay our crowns before you, Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till in glory we adore you, Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

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**FOLLOW THE WAY OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 21:28-32
Vicar Steve Neuman

Statement of Belief Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

BE SEATED

**Friendship Registers
Offering**

STAND

Prayer of the Church *Christian Worship Page 32*

M: Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the countless blessings, which we receive from your hand: the beauties of creation and the bounties of the earth, the joy of life and the pleasure of friendship, the good work and the gift of rest, the privilege to share happiness and sorrow with one another. Above all we praise and thank you for your saving Word and for your Son's body and blood, which you give to us to eat and drink in the sacrament. Through these means of grace, you send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and unite us to Jesus and to the whole Christian Church on earth.

C: Strengthen us through this heavenly food; increase our trust in Christ and our love for one another.

M: Great God and Lord, without your continuing help we easily waiver in our faith, lose courage, and grow careless in our watchfulness. The times and days are perilous. Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence. Open our lips to speak of your grace, and move us to use the gifts that you give us to share your Word of salvation with all people. Protect and prosper the family, the school, the government, and all good institutions that you have established for the benefit of society. Remember in mercy those who are sick and suffering, and bring your healing to troubled homes and lives.

C: Move us o pray for those in need and to help them with deeds of kindness.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith, and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.