

- (Read 1-6, 16-21)

## Chat with the Children: Two Sons

- Retell Jesus' parable of the two sons:
  - which one really did what his Father wanted?
  - (with pictures!)
- *What is under the surface, our real attitude to things, is often more important than the show we put on...*

## Introduction: WYSIWYG

- Computing, word-processors...
  - what you see on the screen is what you get on the page
- Only possible once powerful enough computers were available, doing the work under the surface...
  - and you can get bad results if what is happening "behind the scenes" isn't up to the job...

## Integrity & Consistency

- Jesus concerned that our lives be "what you see on the surface matches what is going on underneath the surface"
  - concerned for our motivation
- **Not here** talking about the possibility of doing outright evil
  - of not doing good deeds, of not praying, of not giving to the needy, of not fasting...
- **Rather concerned with our integrity of motivation, our consistency between our actions and our inner thoughts**
  - so we are not choosing a face to present to those around us
- **v.1** is the summary of several specific points in the following verses:
  - don't do your good deeds in a public way, so others can see you or know that you are doing them... don't draw attention to yourself, however subtly... if you do, those deeds have lost something significant of their value...

### Example: Giving to the needy

- Opposite of "if you've got it, flaunt it"
  - the generosity is there, but the discretion minimises the risk that we are acting so that others will think us generous
  - lovely image - do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing!
  - are we acting to please God, to do the kinds of things he'd want us to be doing?  
For his smile?

### Example: Prayer

- Likewise prayer
  - got the whole Lord's prayer here, but in context one Jesus' main points is that we get away from public "look at me" praying that happened in contemporary Israel
  - so pray in secret, when no-one is looking, when only God will hear...
  - (not the only time or place to pray; key thing here is our motive)

### Example: Fasting

- Fasting was a common sign of passionate faith
  - a conscious focusing on God, putting aside food to focus on prayer
  - if you've ever done it, you'll know it has an impact - feel hungry, might be distracted, get a headache....

- and can make things like sharing food with others tricky - do you sit at the table and not eat?
- (and possibly confusing in our culture of dieting etc in a way Jesus' contemporaries would have found utterly alien!)
- we are not to draw attention to our fasting, when we do put aside food for a period to focus on God

#### Example: Treasures in heaven

- Good cop show line - investigating a murder or whatever - "Follow the money"
  - it'll show you who really had motive, who really committed whatever crime is being portrayed...
- The same is to be true of us:
  - if our lives are investigated, if our investments, our finances, our spending priorities are pursued... what will show up?
  - treasures in heaven - qualities of character in ourselves, and the seeking of His Kingdom in the lives of others?
  - or treasurers on earth?
  - **Story:** a very rich man died. He was famous for his magnificent collection of art treasures, antiques and silver. After the funeral a journalist managed to be standing next to the minister who had conducted the service. The journalist whispered to the minister, "How much did he leave?". "Everything" whispered back the minister...

#### Example: Summer Focus Week

- What is our motivation?
  - to see his kingdom come, to see people come to know him and enter into the kingdom?
  - is that what we want, is that what is prompting us to volunteer?
  - or is it pressure of expectation - from other people, from ourselves, from loyalty to the church as an institution?
- **1 Corinthians 11:28** suggests "A person ought to examine themselves before" they take communion, participate in that central act of worship.
  - likewise, we ought to examine ourselves before we embark on any act of service...
- *For if the foundations, motivations aren't right it will crumble...*
- *But if the foundations are right, then the wonderful prospect of fruitfulness*
  - what you don't see is what you need....