

26th Sunday A

When a tragedy happens, it seems we are quick to look for someone to blame.

When a building collapses... the construction company is blamed.

When a plane is hijacked, How did they get through security?

When there is a flood.... Why didn't the dam hold back the water?

When the Israelites were captured and led into exile, they blamed their kings for not protecting them.

Ezekiel, in the first reading, is teaching the people a new truth. They have no one to blame but themselves. Everyone must take responsibility for their own actions and accept that they brought their own misery upon themselves.

In the Gospel, Jesus is addressing the chief priests and elders. They are the religious leaders and sit in judgment over the sinners and outcasts.

These had assumed that their righteousness had earned them entrance into God's kingdom. They also assumed that the sinfulness of tax collectors and prostitutes would be outside the kingdom.

They had overlooked the possibility of grace and repentance and that they could turn their lives around.

So Jesus tells them a story.... One son says "no" but then has a change of mind, He has a conversion and does obey his father. The other son says he will be obedient to his father , but has no intentions of carrying it out.

The elders had to admit that the first son did the will of the father. They see themselves as the ones who are narrow in their belief about who could be saved. They have to admit that sinners can change and that they will be included in the kingdom.

Who are we in this story?

We'd like think that when we say "Yes" to God, that we will be true to that.

But we know that we are both "yes" and "No" people. We don't always do the right thing.

But there is hope. We can have a change of mind and although we resist or rebel, we can have a change of heart and come back to God.

And the good news is that God does not change his mind about calling us to salvation.

Whether we say yes or no, God keeps calling us.

We are the ones who need a change of mind.

We are the ones who must believe and faithfully do God's will.

And how do we know what is God's will?

It would be great if God would tap us on the shoulder or give us a phone call and tell us what we should do. But that doesn't happen.

We have choices. We pray about them. And then we follow our heart... or follow the most thoughtful way. And you know something? God will be with us however we choose. We will soon know if it is the right path.

What is the most loving thing.

What brings us closer to each other and to God.

What brings us peace.

As Robert Frost wrote in his poem, "The Road Not Taken".

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the road less traveled by
And that has made all the difference."