

In this reading Paul bids the new disciples to be of one mind in love, knowing how Christ Jesus accepted the condition of a servant and was obedient to the point of death. We now confess him as Lord and are called to an obedient working out of our faith. Central to this passage is a poem which may have been adapted from the hopes for a savior of a people who did not yet know Jesus. He has fulfilled humanity's dream of one who will share fully in the mortal condition. Now the Lord is known personally – Jesus. His followers must work out their salvation while discovering that God is active in them for his loving purpose.

Please listen now for these words to the Philippians from St. Paul

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 21:28-32

In a response to a question about authority, Jesus tells a parable of two sons who obeyed their father differently, and he indicates that it is the same with those who are apparently obedient and disobedient in this age. Both John the Baptist and Jesus offered their message of repentance and the hope of the kingdom to all. It was the seeming outcasts who most genuinely responded. Then and now it is not a popular idea to suggest that such persons have priority over those who are established in their religion. Action is the test of obedience.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew.

What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.