

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

## I. Story

On the outskirts of a small town, there was a big, old pecan tree just inside the cemetery fence. One day, two boys filled up a bucketful of nuts and sat down by the tree, out of sight, and began dividing the nuts. "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me," said one boy. As they sorted, several dropped and rolled down toward the fence.

Another boy came riding along the road on his bicycle. As he passed, he thought he heard voices from inside the cemetery. He slowed down to investigate. Sure enough, he heard, "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me ...."

He just knew what it was. He jumped back on his bike and rode off. Just around the bend he met an old man with a cane, hobbling along.

"Come here quick," said the boy, "you won't believe what I heard! Satan and the Lord are down at the cemetery dividing up the souls!"

The man said, "Beat it kid, can't you see it's hard for me to walk." When the boy insisted though, the man hobbled slowly to the cemetery.

Standing by the fence they heard, "One for you, one for me. One for you, one for me."

The old man whispered, "Boy, you've been tellin' me the truth. Let's see if we can see the Lord...?" Shaking with fear, they peered through the fence, yet were still unable to see anything. The old man and the boy gripped the wrought iron bars of the fence tighter and tighter as they tried to get a glimpse of the Lord.

At last they heard, "One for you, one for me. That's all. Now let's go get those nuts by the fence and we'll be done...."

They say the old man had the lead for a good half-mile before the kid on the bike passed him.

## II. Whose are you?

### A. Whose are you?

1. That's really what today's Gospel is all about.

2. Whose are you?

- Who are you going to follow?
- And how are you going to do it?

3. The **Religious Authorities** are upset with Jesus because his Disciples were ignoring ORAL TRADITIONS not in the Torah, but handed down from various teachers.

4. But Jesus tells them, it's not what goes into a person that makes a difference, but rather what comes out.

5. He is calling attention to the fact that it is the *attitude of our hearts* that is truly important.

### B. So I'll ask you again: Whose are you?

- Who are you going to follow?
- And how are you going to do it?

1. If it's what comes forth from a person that is truly important, WHAT are you showing it forth in your life?

2. That's what our NT Lesson is talking about, when it says "*Be doers of the Word and not hearers only.*"

3. How is your willingness to follow Jesus lived out in your life?

4. As the old question goes, "If being a Christian was a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

5. As Jesus says, "It's not what goes in – but what comes out" that makes all the difference.

6. We can go to Church – we can read the Bible – we can say our prayers, and that’s all great stuff – but that’s **what goes in**.

7. It’s **how we live** as a RESULT of all that, that truly makes a difference – both for us and for others.

### III. Living it Out

A. Jesus quotes Isaiah about the people who are so busy worrying about keeping the letter of the law that they don’t live out the spirit of the Law.

1. He says. “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

2. Mary Ann Tolbert writes in her book *Sowing the Gospel*, “If the heart is God’s ground, nothing else is required; and if the heart is not God’s ground, nothing else will suffice.”

3. “If the heart is God’s ground, nothing else is required; and if the heart is not God’s ground, nothing else will suffice.” – how true it is.

4. There’s a picture I got from Facebook that I posted a couple of years ago that looks like **this**:



- a small figure is holding their heart out to Jesus saying: “It’s all I have.

- and Jesus saying, “It’s all I want.”

5. Truly, a picture is worth 1,000 words.

6. That’s all Jesus wants from us too – **our hearts** – and we give them by the way we live our lives.

B. Jesus says it’s what people see that is truly important.

1. You remember that old Apple Computer trade mark – “Wysiwyg” – What you see is what you get?

2. Well the same is true of our lives: “What folks see is WHO you are.

3. It’s the simple living of our lives that tells the tale.

C. St. Francis used to say, “Preach the Gospel at all times, when necessary use words.”

1. Who in your life do you know you can say that about?

2. As I pondered that question, I could look back over my life and find different people, at various stages – childhood, teenage years, adulthood – who were examples for me – just by the way they lived their lives.

3. Certainly weren’t perfect but you knew they were in tune with God in their lives

4. And that’s who we are called to be for one another, as well.

## Conclusion

It doesn't matter how many Sundays we sit in Church, or if we think we are saved; God sees what we do and how we treat other people – that's what really matters.

Where have you given your heart?

“If the heart is God's ground, nothing else is required; and if the heart is not God's ground, nothing else will suffice.”

“Preach the Gospel at all times, and if you must use words.”

## Let Us Pray

Grant, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may be so grafted inwardly into our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

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