

**Jesus Offers Grace That Helps Us to Wed Doctrine and Action, Faith and Works, Belief and Experience**

Like the second son in the parable who told his father that he would work in the vineyard as instructed, it can become easy to say, "Yes, father, I'll go," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday, but then "pull back and sit still. We can be tempted to think that because we know a lot about God that we actually know God and are doing his will. What happens in this case is that we become admirers of Jesus, but not followers of Jesus," Pastor Thelander said.

"But the message of our lessons this morning is that God is interested in obedience, whether that obedience is offered by Jew or Gentile. God is looking for people who will do his will, not merely talk about doing his will.

"The language of the Old Testament lesson from Ezekiel is the language of repentance, of conversion, of turning from one way to embrace the way of God," Pastor Thelander continued. "The word 'turn' appears no less than five times in this passage, and the message is clear: It doesn't matter who you are, if you turn from sin and obey God you will live; if you insist on going your own way and continuing in your sin, you will be judged according to your actions, and you will die. . . .

"God is looking for obedience, regardless of your pedigree or social status. Jesus makes this point clearly in the Gospel. Because they believed the message of John the Baptist, Jesus says that the tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the Kingdom of Heaven before the religious elite will.

"Now some have taken Jesus' words here to mean that works and obedience are not relevant to getting into the Kingdom. It's faith that matters. That is not true. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance and bearing fruit in keeping with repentance. If the tax collectors and harlots believed John's message, then that means they repented and they bore fruit in keeping with repentance, which meant leaving behind sinful ways of life. Like the first son in the parable who initially said 'no,' these people changed their minds, they repented, they turned their lives to act in accordance with God's will—and in true biblical fashion, then, their living faith became manifested in their obedient works. . . .

"This leads to our second lesson for today: The grace of God that saves you produces obedience in you. Otherwise, grace hasn't truly saved you. . . .

"As we come to the Table of the Lord this morning, the grace that Jesus offers us is a grace that helps us passionately to wed doctrine and action, faith and works, belief and obedience. His is the grace that is living and active, that helps us to 'rise and act our creed,' as one of our Epworth hymns says. So let us come . . . knowing that grace . . . but also to live it."



"Come on, let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!" "The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone." This we will hear Sunday in the Gospel lesson. Likewise, the O.T. lesson will tell us that God will not tolerate a "vineyard" that does not live up to its calling. In the words of Ps. 80:14, we will pray to God to "tend this vine." Image credit: [www.servicioskoinonia.org](http://www.servicioskoinonia.org)

**Editor:** Box 972, Boise, ID 83701, 208-336-3951, harbingermail@aol.com

**Pastor:** The Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander, epworthrector@msn.com

**On the Web:** [www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org](http://www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org)

Sundays, 9:00 a.m.: G. K. Chesterton discussion series

Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

This Sunday, 6 p.m.: **Evensong, and "How I Spent My Summer Vacation"**

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Evening Prayers

**For the poor (updated list):** Meat; fresh produce; canned fruits and vegetables; dairy products; peanut butter; cooking oil; pancake mix; syrup; spices; diapers; baby wipes; bathroom tissue; for personal care: soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream; new underwear (adults and children); warm clothing and socks; umbrellas; cleaning supplies; bleach.

**Readings, 10/5, 10 a.m.:** Is. 5:1-7; Ps. 80:7-14; Phil. 3:14-21; Mt. 21:33-43.  
**10/5, 6:00 p.m.:** Ps. 145; Hosea 13:4-14; 2 Cor. 2:6-16. **10/12 (Harvest Festival):** Deut. 8:6-16; Ps. 113:1-8; 2 Cor. 9:6-15; Luke 17:11-19.

**Prayer Emphases:** Sudan; United Methodist Church; La Habra Hills Presbyterian Church, La Habra, CA, and the Rev. Geoff Pfaff; Focus Seminars; parishioners on York Street.

**Chesterton's Orthodoxy:**

Sunday's 9 a.m. discussion: "The Ethics of Fairy Tales", based on chapter 4, "The Ethics of Elfland". For discussion questions, chapter text, and notes, visit the Website.

