
“Actions Speak Louder than Words”

Obedience Children’s Sermon on Matthew 21:23-32



Main Objective: It’s easy to talk a big game. We can go to church, “brag” about being Christian, and even study the Bible for hours on end. However, that all means nothing if we are not living out our faith and genuinely loving others. In this passage, Jesus encounters hypocritical Pharisees who question His authority, though they do not practice what they preach. This message communicates to kids that sometimes talking isn’t enough. We have to demonstrate the things we say with actions, as well. The joyful news is that Jesus demonstrated His love for us in a very big way, by dying for us so that we might live!

Law/Gospel Theme: Some might interpret this parable with an emphasis on the way we act, claiming that we must “do enough” to justify or demonstrate our faith. We know, however, that God’s love does not depend on what we do, but on what Christ did. His death and resurrection was the ultimate act of obedience. He proclaimed His authority by following through on His promises, unlike either son in the story did. The Gospel reminds us that our faith relies on His work.

Optional Materials: Something that needs demonstrated or displayed: a shoelace to tie, an object that needs put together, a musical instrument, etc.

Bible Passage: Matthew 21:23-32

You can watch a [teaching example of this children’s sermon](#) on our [YouTube channel](#).



Children's Sermon (Matthew 21:23-32)

Obedience

Greet children, and have some object or element that needs to be demonstrated as well as explained. Suggestions include tying a shoe, playing a musical instrument, using a cooking utensil, or putting together some sort of object or tool. For the purposes of this message example, we will be using the instrument explanation.

Hello, children of God! I have something here, and I wonder if you know what it might be. Inside this case is a musical instrument. I can open it up, take it out, and make songs with it! I just have to put the little pieces together, press the buttons, blow in some air, and it makes music! I'm sure you can imagine from my description exactly what this is and what it sounds like, right? *(Wait a moment to see if students respond).*

No, you're not sure what's in here? Well, I suppose I could show you... *(Open up the case to reveal the instrument inside).* There—now you can see it, so that takes care of things, right? You can get the visual idea, it all makes sense? Still not quite? I mean, I am telling you I can play this thing. You believe that, right? Isn't that enough?Well, I guess it might make a little more sense if I demonstrated it for you. Maybe I should show you how this works by actually playing it and following through on what I'm talking about. *(Demonstrate the instrument with a few played notes.)*

Well, sometimes it isn't enough to just talk about things. We have to actually do them, don't we? You might be able to imagine what this was, but it sure does make a lot more sense if I play it for you.

Did you know that in some ways, our faith can be like that? We want to do more than just talk about our love for God and for other people. We should be living it out, too. Jesus discussed this a lot. In today's Gospel, some Pharisees (those were the guys who thought they had things all together and always wanted to worry about rules) approached Jesus and asked Him how He acted with such authority. They were trying to trick Him and trap Him up.

Jesus gave a parable to demonstrate that the Pharisees were doing a lot of talking, but not much real doing. He said that a man had two sons, and asked them both to work for him. One son said he would, but didn't do anything. The other son refused to work at first, but later went



and did the work. Obviously, the son who really worked was the obedient one. Jesus was making a point that the Pharisees were caught up in saying they did the right thing, but they were missing the big picture. They were missing Jesus! He said that the sinners would be the ones to learn the truth. You see, we need to keep our eyes open for ways that we can truly love and obey, not just talk about it.

And there's an even greater truth being demonstrated in this parable. Jesus did have power and authority. It came from God Himself. He wanted everyone to know that HE was the obedient son. Jesus did what He said He would. He came to rescue us from sin, and He fulfilled God's promises. We can take joy in knowing that He will always do what He says, and that because of that, we have the mercy and grace that come from God. We want to pass that along by truly living out our love and serving others!

Children's Prayer Moment

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for sending your son

He truly is who He says He is

Help us to be genuine in our actions

And to live out our love with one another

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!



[Matthew 21:23-32](#)

Bible Verses/story to Reference:

The Authority of Jesus Challenged 23 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons 28 “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May

2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

Don't miss our most popular resources.

- Over 400 Printable [Bible Coloring Pages](#)
- Over 800 [Bible Lessons](#) and Complete [Sunday School Curriculum](#)
- New [Children's Sermons Object Lessons](#) every week
- Our sister website called [Sunday School Works!](#)

If your church buys resources, please consider using [The Sunday School Store](#). Church budgets are tight. That's why our digital curriculum is half the cost of printed material. Even when finances are limited, your teaching can make an eternal difference.

Use coupon code at checkout

SAVE25

Or [click this link](#), discount will apply at checkout



The Sunday School Store

