

**How Could *They* Be Passing Through the Pearly Gates?**  
**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Matthew 21:28-32**

The readings today (Ezekiel 18:25-28; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32)  
have an interesting common thread.

At first, one might think that they are about  
getting our religious acts together:

Ezekiel speaks of “doing what is right and just, turning away from all sin,  
so to preserve life”.

And Jesus offers a parable, speaking of obeying the Father’s command.

One might think that

- we are simply being strongly encouraged to “walk the walk”
- we are simply being given another moral exhortation

I would suggest, however, that we ought to hear something else being said.

We, of course, all must try to “walk the walk”.

But the fact is that *all* of us fail, in one way or another, to “walk the walk”.

God knows this, He who never dis-courages, but always en-courages.

Saint Paul speaks of having the same attitude in us as is in Christ.

Hmm: attitude, inner disposition, orientation of the heart ...a question of *wanting*.

And Jesus says in the parable that tax collectors and prostitutes  
*are* entering the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus does not say that *ex*-tax collectors and *ex*-prostitutes  
are entering the kingdom of heaven.

Those whose walk is imperfect, who hobble,  
who are not simply talking a talk,  
but whose walk clearly does not match their talk,  
yet who dare to cry out in their struggle,  
are being welcomed into God’s embrace.

We are *all* in this same boat.

The invitation through these readings is to dare to *hope*.

Let us be embraced in the midst of our brokenness...