

## Grace, Week 3: The Laborers in the Vineyard 11-17-13

### Matthew 20:1-16

**20** As Jesus was telling what the kingdom of heaven would be like, he said: Early one morning a man went out to hire some workers for his vineyard.<sup>2</sup> After he had agreed to pay them the usual amount for a day's work, he sent them off to his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> About nine that morning, the man saw some other people standing in the market with nothing to do. <sup>4</sup> He said he would pay them what was fair, if they would work in his vineyard. <sup>5</sup> So they went.

At noon and again about three in the afternoon he returned to the market. And each time he made the same agreement with others who were loafing around with nothing to do.

<sup>6</sup> Finally, about five in the afternoon the man went back and found some others standing there. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?"

<sup>7</sup> "Because no one has hired us," they answered. Then he told them to go work in his vineyard.

<sup>8</sup> That evening the owner of the vineyard told the man in charge of the workers to call them in and give them their money. He also told the man to begin with the ones who were hired last. <sup>9</sup> When the workers arrived, the ones who had been hired at five in the afternoon were given a full day's pay.

<sup>10</sup> The workers who had been hired first thought they would be given more than the others. But when they were given the same, <sup>11</sup> they began complaining to the owner of the vineyard. <sup>12</sup> They said, "The ones who were hired last worked for only one hour. But you paid them the same that you did us. And we worked in the hot sun all day long!"

<sup>13</sup> The owner answered one of them, "Friend, I didn't cheat you. I paid you exactly what we agreed on. <sup>14</sup> Take your money now and go! What business is it of yours if I want to pay them the same that I paid you?" <sup>15</sup> Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Why should you be jealous, if I want to be generous?"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus then said, "So it is. Everyone who is now first will be last, and everyone who is last will be first." CEV

According to [Matthew 20:1–16](#) Jesus says that any "laborer" who accepts the invitation to the work in the vineyard (said by Jesus to represent

the [Kingdom of Heaven](#)), no matter how late in the day, will receive an equal reward with those who have been faithful the longest.

One commentator says,

*It is not really necessary to decide who the eleventh-hour workers are. The point of the parable — both at the level of Jesus and the level of Matthew's Gospel — is that God saves by grace, not by our worthiness. That applies to all of us.*

Altogether, 4 groups of workers are hired:

- Early morning, 6 AM
- 9 AM
- Noon
- 3 PM

The 1<sup>st</sup> group would get 1 denarius, the rate of pay for a Roman soldier (Today, \$60).

The last group only worked 1 hour. They get paid the full days wages. The early group and others all get mad. Yet they agreed to get paid \$60. But it doesn't seem fair. And it isn't!!!

**The story illustrates the grace and mercy of God!**

**God wants all people to be saved!**

“God wants everyone to be saved and to fully understand the truth.”  
-1 Timothy 2:4, NIV

- Some respond early in life,
- some when death knocks on their door
- those who decided early on cannot complain to God!
- God will have mercy on whom he wants and when he wants to

God said to Moses,

“For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.”

-Romans 9:15, New Living Translation

## **There is no special treatment in God's Kingdom**

“the last will be first, and the first last”

- no matter how long or how hard a believer works during his lifetime, the reward of eternal life will be the same given to all
- The thief on the cross ([Luke 23:39-43](#)),

“One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus by saying, “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!” But the other criminal told the first one off, “Don’t you fear God? Aren’t you getting the same punishment as this man? We got what was coming to us, but he didn’t do anything wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Remember me when you come into power!” Jesus replied, “I promise that today you will be with me in paradise.” -Luke 23:39-43, CEV

- He rec’d the same gift promised to the Apostles, those that were living daily a life given over to God, to those who worshipped every week, prayed all the time, did the things Jesus said to do.....
- He would not live a life now of witnessing, worshipping, and self denial. It was over for him
- But his life would be talked about forever!

## **God is generous to everybody equally! (grace)**

- We are all undeserving: no one is 1<sup>st</sup> or last in order-achievements, status quo, economic standing all have nothing to do with it
- He is merciful, not giving us what we deserve (punishment for our sins—Jesus!)
- Another important fact about God: He is fair, just

## **What do we do with Grace shown to others?**

- People who accept Jesus late in life, near death, in jail, due to circumstances....it doesn’t seem fair!!!

It's been said, 'If you want to be miserable, compare what you have to someone else.' Invariably there will be someone who has done better than you for some reason or the other.

It speaks to churches, to those of us who have committed our ways to Jesus:

- Surely God favors us *a little more* than those new people!
- We said yes 15 yrs ago.....
- We have been serving you Jesus with our whole heart mind soul and strength!
- God's grace is extended not only to us but to those who have not rec'd it yet!

Have you rec'd God's grace, meaning His love, into your life yet? Would you consider today accepting to be true the story of Jesus:

- His life
- His death
- His resurrection
- His call to repent / turn to God?

It's not too late, He is waiting for you.