

The Parables of Our Lord

The Parable of “The Workers In The Vineyard” - Matthew 20:1-16

(Part 2 of 2)

Wednesday, October 26th - 2022

Last week, we examined “The Parable Of The Workers In The Vineyard” and the **object** of the parable is the sovereignty of God in salvation i.e., how He chooses to show His grace to some and not to others.

Let’s re-read the parable together. Matthew Chapter 20:1-16 (ESV),

“[1] “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. [2] After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4] and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ [5] So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ [7] They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ [8] And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ [9] And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. [10] Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. [11] And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, [12] saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ [13] But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14]

Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. [15] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? [16] So the last will be first, and the first last."

[Review of last week's study removed as unnecessary - refer to part 1 for a breakdown of our first study]

Let's get into Part 2 of our discussion. Now the question is "Why did Jesus use this parable at that time?", and the answer to that is that Jesus gave this parable right after His conversation with the rich young ruler in Matthew 19, beginning at verse 16, "*Good Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?*". He probably thought of himself as a guy who had done his spiritual duties and whose spiritual life was in order. But Jesus challenges him on his obedience under the Law. However, the rich young man insists that "*all of these things I have kept. What do I still lack?*" to which Jesus tells him to sell everything he owned, give the proceeds to the poor, and to follow Him. But rather than repent, the man simply walked away sad.

The Twelve were shocked by what Jesus said to him. In verse 25, they asked "*Who then can be saved?*". Jesus then emphasizes that salvation is GOD'S work, not something any sinner can merit for himself. In Verse 26, He says "*With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*". The Twelve are faced with the inability to earn God's favor. They had left everything behind to follow Christ, unlike this rich young ruler. Verse 27 confirms that and they need reassurance that their sacrifice for the Lord wasn't all a waste. And that's when Jesus tells them this parable.

Verse 27, "*See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?*". In the parable, the disciples are the 6:00am day laborers. They were the first called by the Lord at the

start of His ministry here on earth, they had given up their homes & jobs to follow Christ. They would all eventually die for the sake of the Gospel and they wanted to know that their sacrifices counted for something.

They knew that Jesus was the Messiah and they expected an earthly kingdom but that was an immature understanding of Christ's earthly mission. In Acts 1:6, they asked Him, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*". They were still expecting their crowns.

Matthew 19:27, Peter asks "*What then will we have?*". Jesus does assure them that they'll have places of honor in the Kingdom of God, but Jesus also says that everyone else in the Kingdom of God will be honored as well. In verses 28 & 29 Jesus says, "**[28]**...*Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.*".

They greatly desired "special honors". Matthew 20:20-24 reads, "**[20]** *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. [21] And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."* **[22]** *Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."* **[23]** *He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."* **[24]** *And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.*". They were upset because they all craved the best seats!

In the Upper Room, just after the Lord broke the bread and blessed the wine, “...*a dispute arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest*” (Luke 22:24). What a picture of human nature! “The Parable of The Workers In The Vineyard” was given to the Twelve to confront them in their selfishness and greed for greatness.

The clear lesson of this parable is that God gives the same overwhelming grace to everyone who follows Jesus. Even the thief on the cross. Thankfully, God doesn't give any believer what he or she truly DESERVES.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15, Paul says “**[14]** *If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire*”.

Christ teaches us about a foundational truth about the eternal life that is given to all who embrace Him as Lord and Savior. Heaven is a gift of grace, given to all believers equally. In the kingdom of God, He doesn't play favorites and therefore doesn't make distinctions between male and female, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile.

Number 1: It is God who initiates salvation. In the parable, the landowner **went to the Marketplace** of the world and **brought** the workers into his vineyard. God is the seeker AND the savior - our salvation is entirely His work. We don't have a right to make any demands upon Him and we don't have a right to set any limits upon what He decides to give or not to give to someone other than us.

Number 2: God calls and saves sinners. He calls those who understand and KNOW their own need, not people who think of themselves as “just fine” and “in need of nothing”. Mark 2:17,

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Number 3: God is sovereign even in the outworking of His salvation. We don't know why God sometimes saves people at a young age nor why He does so on a person's death bed (or somewhere in-between). God alone sovereignly determines both who He will call and when He will do so.

Number 4: God is faithful and keeps all of His promises. The landowner told the first group of day laborers that he'd pay them a full denarius and at the end of the workday, he did. He kept His promise to the others he hired later as well.

Number 5: God gives us much more than we ever deserve. *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...”* (James 1:17). As sinners, we all deserve nothing less than eternal death. That would be justice. But we didn't get justice. We got GRACE.

Number 6: We should always celebrate the graciousness of God. This parable exalts His gracious nature. Personally, I can't help but be in awe at His grace towards me. God's grace extends to the CHIEF of sinners; what a reason to rejoice!

So, with that measure of grace shown to me, how can I withhold similar grace to another? Is there an opportunity for me to extend a similar grace to someone else? Co-worker, friend, spouse, child, sibling, parent, etc? To treat them far better than they deserve? Time is short, so let's all celebrate the gift of His grace towards us.