

**The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay them a denarius<sup>[a]</sup> for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.

<sup>4</sup> He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ <sup>5</sup> So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup> About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. 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.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

<sup>8</sup> “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

<sup>9</sup> “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup> When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup> ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

<sup>13</sup> “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.

<sup>15</sup> Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

<sup>16</sup> “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

**QUESTIONS**

**1. Read Matthew 19:16-30, the verses prior to our text this week to briefly note why Jesus offers this parable.**

**2. In the parable, what does the landowner agree to pay the workers he hires at the beginning of the day?**

- 3. What does the landowner tell the next group of laborers, which he hires about nine o'clock, that he will pay them for their work?**
  
- 4. Who else does the landowner send to the vineyard?**
  
- 5. How does the landowner instruct his foreman to pay the workers? Why do you think he does this?**
  
- 6. How much does each worker get paid?**
  
- 7. What do the workers who worked all day think about getting the same pay as the ones who worked only an hour or so? What would you think if that were you?**
  
- 8. What is the landowner's reply to those who complain against him?**
  
- 9. What is Jesus' summation to this parable? What is his message to the disciples in this saying?**

## **DISCUSSION**

If we apply the tool of allegory to this parable, how would you connect the characters and elements of the story to the kingdom of heaven/church? Who is the landowner? Who are the workers in the vineyard? What does the vineyard represent? What does the end of the day pay time represent? What would be the argument that the workers have with the landowners represent? How does the landowner's answer apply to the kingdom of heaven/church?