

Week of September 20, 2020

Matthew 20:1-16

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace;

⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.

⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'

⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.

¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,

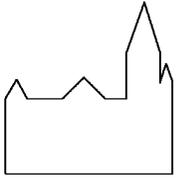
¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?'

¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. When you go out to a restaurant with a group, how do you split the bill? What's your worst experience with this?
- B. Would you rather have a guaranteed small gain or a small chance at a larger gain?

Bible Study Questions:

- 1. Look at how the landowner hires each group of workers. Why is it different?
- 2. Why do you think he pays the last-hired workers first?
- 3. In verse 10, it says the first-hired workers "thought they would receive more"? How much more do you think they were expecting?
- 4. In verse 6, why do you think he asks the workers why they have been standing there before hiring them?
- 5. Is it a good idea for employees to know what other employees make? Who benefits from knowing or not knowing?
- 6. When have you received unmerited generosity? Are you more comfortable with receiving extra or would you rather entirely earn something for yourself? Why?
- 7. The people who were hired at 5 pm would have been on the verge of losing hope of getting work that day. What part of your life feels like "5 pm" and how can you still have hope for a good ending?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about hope