

Lesson 3-2 Parable of Laborers and the Vineyard

1. The Bible has a central focus: grace.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
Ephesians 2:9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2. The highlights of this reading are:

- * By faith we receive goodness from God
- * It is a gift
- * It is not dependent on our works
- * We have nothing to boast about

3. Many who are exposed to the concept of grace are either offended or confused. They feel that it is not fair. Is it fair that a sinner repent on his death bed and receives that same as those who spent their entire life in God's service?

4. Please read the parable of the laborers:

Matthew 20:1 "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.
Matthew 20:2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. (ESV)

5. The master of the house and the laborers entered into an agreement. In your own words, what was the agreement?

6. What were the qualifications of these laborers?

Continuing:

Matthew 20:3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace,
 Matthew 20:4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' (ESV)

7. These laborers also entered to a contract with the man; what agreement did the master of the house have with these laborers? what was different about this agreement than that of the first group?

8. what were the qualification of these laborers?

Let's continue:

Matthew 20:5 So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same.
 Matthew 20:6 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?'
 Matthew 20:7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.'
 Matthew 20:8 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.'
 Matthew 20:9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. (ESV)

9. was the pay (one denarius) at all dependant on the amount of work each worker accomplished? And why?

10. why do you think those hired at the eleventh hour, hadn't been hired before? were they less desirable for one reason or another?

11. Why do you think the master of the house wanted the last hired to be paid first?

12. Did those hired last know what they would be paid? Why?

13. Do you think the last hired were happy with their pay? Why?

14. How about those hired at the 3rd, 6th, and 9th hour. Were they happy with their pay? Why?

15. Continue:

Matthew 20:10 Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius.

Matthew 20:11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house,

Matthew 20:12 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.' (ESV)

16. If you would have been one of the early workers, would you have complained? How about if you had been hired the third hour? Sixth hour? Ninth hour?

17. If you were God and made an agreement with someone and found that later they thought you were unfair to them, how would you feel, and what would you do?

18. What would have happened if the first laborers would have been paid first? Would the attitude of the man who murmured have been revealed?

Finishing the parable:

Matthew 20:13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?

Matthew 20:14 Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.

Matthew 20:15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?'

Matthew 20:16 So the last will be first, and the first last." (ESV)

19. Did the master of the house find out about the attitude of the laborers?

20. The only common attribute of the workers is that they responded to the calling of the master. Do you agree?

21. In your opinion, which laborers appreciated the master most?

22. This parable teaches us that regardless of when we respond to his call and regardless of who we are, God considers us worthy to receive his goodness and grace. It is important that we don't grumble when others receive His goodness and grace.