

“Grace” - Matthew 20:1-16

Ask - Have you ever complained about your paycheck?

Background - Jesus regularly taught using parables. Today’s lesson comes from the parable known as “The Laborers in the Vineyard”.

“Workers Hired” - Matthew 20:1-7

(v1-2) To what does Jesus compare the kingdom of Heaven in this parable? When did he hire the first set of workers? How much did they agree to be paid for a full day’s work?

(v3-5) The landowner hired more workers throughout the day. When is the 3rd hour, the 6th hour, and the ninth hour? (answer: 9am, noon, and 3pm)

(v6-7) The landowner hired a final set of workers at the 11th hour. When was that and how long did they have left to work? (5pm, just 1 hour presumably)

IN JESUS’ PARABLE, A LANDOWNER HIRED SEVERAL DAY LABORERS - SOME FIRST THING AND THE MORNING AND OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

“Equally Paid” - Matthew 20:8-12

(v8) When quitting time came at the end of the day, in what order did the landowner pay his workers?

(v9) How much did he pay the workers who were hired at the 11th hour (and presumably all of those who only worked part of the day)?

(v10-12) What did those who’d been hired early in the morning suppose? Why? How much were they paid? Why did they grumble?

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE LANDOWNER PAID ALL THE WORKERS THE SAME AMOUNT, REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG THEY HAD ACTUALLY WORKED.

“Grace Exemplified” - Matthew 20:13-16

(v13-14) How did the landowner answer the complaints of those who had worked all day?

(v15) Was the landowner within his rights to pay the workers equally? Would you consider this to be a fair practice? Discuss.

(v16) How does this principle reflect God's grace and generosity over human effort or labor? Explain.

GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO REWARD BELIEVERS AS HE SEES FIT. HIS GRACE IS NOT BASED ON OUR MERIT BUT HIS GENEROSITY.

Application - Christians must be careful not to believe that we deserve God's grace more than anyone else. God's salvation and goodness is His to impart, and He chooses to give it equally to everyone who will receive it. The brand new believer receives the same portion as a Christian who has served the Lord faithfully for decades. Rather than complain, we should be grateful that God would save us as undeserving sinners at all and celebrate His generosity and kindness! Have you ever been guilty of the sin described in this parable?