

# Life Lessons from the Parables of Jesus

## **Don't Count My Money**

Matthew 20:1-16 NIV

Morning Star Church

Rev. Dr. Beverly D. Frazier, Senior Pastor

Rev. Kathy Smallwood, Teacher



# Parable of the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16





## Matthew 20: 1-16

### 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 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.”

- The Living Wage during these NT times was one denarius per day.
- We see in this parable that the vineyard owner goes out out to hire laborers at five different times in one day.
- As the day comes to an end, the Owner pays them all the same wage.
- Those hired first complains to the Land Owner about everyone receiving the same wage.

Keys to  
understanding....





## A closer look

- In the first scene of this parable the vineyard owner appears at the “unemployment corner” of the marketplace. He selects some workers and offers them the standard wage of one denarius for a day’s work.
- The workers accept his proposal and head off, probably hoping for another day of work or more after this assignment.
- Halfway through the morning the owner returns to the market. He finds other unemployed men who are standing, not sitting.
- The owner makes a second selection, but does not quote a pay scale. He says” I will pay you what is right.”
- He goes out again at noon and three o’clock and makes new selections with the same offer to pay what is right.



## A Closer Look continued

- The owner returns one hour before sundown.
- He still finds men standing waiting for work.
- When the owner asks why are they still standing there, the men replied “because no one has hired us”.
- He hires these men to also work in his vineyard.



## Consider this:

- By the end of the day five different groups of workers are busily employed.
- The first group has a contract. A promise to pay a specific amount for the days work.
- During the day, three other groups were an unspecified amount- that is what is right/ what is just for their labors.
- As the work day had only 1 hour left, the last group was not promised anything. They went to work in hopes of something and trusting the land owner.
- At the end of the work day, the owner called his foreman to give out the payments. He told the foreman to pay them all the same wage, in reverse order starting with the last group down to the first group.





# Grumbling and Complaining

- First hour workers become angry when they say those who came at the last hour were given the same rate of pay.
- The first hour workers felt entitled to receive more or for the last hour workers to receive less.
- The first hour workers believed that had bore the brunt of the work- the heavy lifting during the heat of the day.
- They were counting the wages of the other workers against their own wage.
- They were paid the wage they had agreed to.
- Whose money was it in the first place?





## Don't Count My Money

- Whose money is it? It is the Landowner's money.
- He gave the workers what he agreed to pay them. The workers were counting his money and challenging his right to how he distributed his money.
- The land owner showed Amazing Grace to the unemployed workers but giving them the opportunity to work for a day's wage.
- Those who worked the 12 hour day resented the grace given to the other workers. They believed they had earned/worked their way to more.
- Question: On what basis should the grace shown to others irritate the 12 hour worker who were paid what was promised to them?

**Justice Defined:** Justice is more than equal application of the law. In this parable, justice includes **respect** for the dignity of those in need and a deep concern for their welfare.

**The compassionate employer.** This parable offers an example of an employer who has compassion for the unemployed and who shows **amazing sensitivity to both their physical needs and self respect.**

**The kingdom of heaven** described. The kingdom is where costly grace is offered to those who need it.

**A warning:** The parable offers a picture of those who seek to control the master's grace and to pressure him into denying grace to the needy who have done their best.

**Indeed the first shall be last and the last shall be first.**

**Eyes and Heart:** May we have the eyes of the Master to see the needs of others. May we have the Heart of the Master which is a heart of compassion towards others who, like ourselves need the Grace of God.

## Life Lessons from this parable





JESUS

Comes to Us where we live.

He Loves us as we are.





# Reference

- Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes. Kenneth E. Bailey

