

The Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 20:1-16 A Sovereign God of Grace

Isaiah 55:8-98 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

A) Here is what God is saying: You and I don't think alike – we don't act alike!

B) That is a fundamental reality that we have to grab a hold of as believers

1) If we are going to walk with God that is something that we really need to accept.

C) The longer you walk with God the more you come to realize – He does a lot of things differently from us

D) Over the course of your life as a Christian there are a lot of things that you are just not going to understand – 1) But that is ok – **That should excite us really – your God doesn't fit into a box –**

E) Your God isn't so small that you can explain him – that is part of **the wonder that makes Him God**

F) Christian life is part exploration!

1) We should be in Constant discovery mode – concerning God's heart and ways / Character

Well, the Parable that we are looking at today is one of my Favorites because it illustrates the reality – that God does things different from us!

A) It is a parable that at first glance elicits different emotions and reactions

B) Some at first might be upset by this parable – others might be moved to being awestruck

C) When we are done today – My Prayer is that all of us would be at the very least – a little more appreciative of Who our God is

Read the Parable

The Parable comes on the heels of a discussion that Jesus had with the rich young ruler beg v.16 of Ch.19

A) Rich young ruler came inquiring about eternal life

B) Jesus revealed his hang up was this: His God was his riches –

1) Jesus said – give and follow mewent away sad ..

C) Which prompted Peter to say: We left all to follow you – what are we going to get for that. RDv 28-30

28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Jesus gave them a marvelous promise of rewards in this life and in the next.

A) They would even share thrones when He established His kingdom.

B) Whatever good things they had forsaken for His sake would be returned to them a hundredfold.

1) In other words, they were not making sacrifices—they were making investments.

C) Something we all need to remember when we start thinking we are making sacrifices for God.

1) Really we are investing in our future.

D) God is infinitely generous and gracious and will always give us better than we deserve.

It is this last statement 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first. that prompted Jesus to tell this parable.

The parable describes the kind of thing that frequently happened at certain times in Palestine.

A) The grape harvest ripened towards the end of September, and then close on its heels the rains came.

B) If the harvest was not ingathered before the rains broke, then it was ruined; so to get the harvest in was a frantic race against time

C) In the morning, if a foreman saw rain coming, he would quickly go to the town square and hire workers to harvest the grapes.

1) If the skies became even more threatening, he would go yet again and hire more workers.

D) This would continue until the foreman had all the workers he needed to beat the rain.

The First group was hired at 6am it was agreed that they would be paid a denarius

A) Which was perfectly normal; a *denarius* or a *drachma* was the normal day's wage for a working man;

B) The market-place was the equivalent of the labour exchange.

1) A man came there first thing in the morning, carrying his tools, and waited until someone hired him.

C) The men who stood in the market-place were waiting for work,

1) the fact that some of them stood on until even five o'clock in the evening is the proof of how desperately they wanted it.

The Jewish day began at sunrise: 6am and that is when the first group went out. 12 hr work day

A) The 2nd group was hired at the 3rd hour or 9am

The 3rd group at the 6th hour or 12 noon

B) The last group was hired at the 11th hour or 5pm

C) It was customary at the end of the day to pay the Laborers

1) So they all line up starting with the guys who were hired last @ 5pm – until the group that started @ 6am

D) Group hired last was paid a Denarius – which prompted the guys hired first to think – we Scored

1) **Thought they would get an extra bonuses**, but that is not what happened – they received their denarius

Angered and began to Protest – that is not fair! We worked longer – should be paid more

A) The owner of the answered: V.13 **'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?**

B) **Now I have to ask – how does that make you feel?**

Do you identify with the guys hired first?

1) Would your reaction be to cry FOUL – NOT Fair?

C) Or do you read this and think WOW – what awesome grace being poured out here.

The last question is an interesting one. { Read

A) I am doing something good – with what I have and you are seeing it as evil –

B) The problem is with you..... not me!

Your Reaction when others are blessed – Happy?

Or wondering – what about me

A) Tendency to think – Lord I work harder than that guy – been faithful for a long time { he's a flake

B) Guard against Jealousy and comparisons

1) Peter – you are going to suffer - What about John

Don't worry about John – you serve me!

C) This reveals that the Parable is not really about fairness or equality or even rewards

1) **The focus is not the workers – it is about the owner**

D) The Parable is illustrating the Sovereignty of God

1) He **does what He wants** – when He wants and with who He wants - **Who are we to question God!**

E) The Parable is meant to magnify His Sov. & Grace!

His Kingdom is one where the King is always fair!

A) He does what He promised – He agreed to pay the first workers a denarius and He did

B) But it is also a **kingdom** where the King enjoys **dispensing grace** on pp

1) He loves giving us what we don't deserve – showering blessings upon us that we don't deserve

C) He gets a kick out of doing the unordinary – The unexpected –

C) Parting an ocean so his pp can crossover on dry ground - **DRY GROUND – NOT MUDDY OR DAMP**

D) Using a boy to bring down a giant

1) Brought down the walls of Jericho with a shout

E) Used a group of **unskilled and untrained** men to turn the world upside down

1) Uses the foolish the unnatural and unexpected to bring down/ blow the minds of the wise

F) Blessing guys hired in the 11th hour because He wants to! Because He enjoys it

Since this parable is really about Him – close today by noting 5 things this Parable teaches us about God

#1 It is God who initiates the relationship!

The landowner went out looking for workers, and it was he who asked them to labor in his vineyard.

God is the one who came to seek and save the lost!

#2 The Parable magnifies the generosity of God!

A) The workers did not all do the same work – but they did receive the same pay.

B) Now there are other Parables like the Parable of the talents - that we will see - that teach us that the rewards in heaven **will vary** based on productivity and faithfulness

C) For that reason I don't think this parable is talking about rewards at all – but more

1) Simply the daily dispensing of God's grace

D) He gives what He knows we need.

E) Some have suggested that the workers who were hired late in the day were old and weak and not the most desirable to work

1) But they were willing & eager to work

They waited all day { **“No one hired us”**

F) And yet they were paid the same by the owner

1) Could it be that He sensed their need – and felt compelled to bless them { **That is so God!–**

This parable is magnifying the Generosity of God

A) I think the Parable also serves as a sense of warning to the disciples and to the Jews in general who had a tendency to look on the gentiles as inferior.

B) It is as if Jesus said to them, **“ You have received the great privilege of coming into the Christian Church and fellowship very early, right at the beginning.**

C) In later days others will come in. You must not claim a special honor and a special place because you were Christians before they were.

D) All men, no matter when they come, are equally precious to God. ”

Barclay puts it this way: “It means that no matter when a man enters the Kingdom, late or soon, in the first flush of youth, in the strength of the midday, or when the shadows are lengthening, he is equally dear to God.”

#3 The Parable reminds us that God continues to call men into His Kingdom.

A) He keeps going into the market place – desires that none should perish

B) Don't wait until the 11th hour – tomorrow is promised to no man

C) Today is the day of Salvation

#4 The Parable teaches us that the King welcomes all those who are willing to come.

#5 The Parable also reminds us that the King expects us to work

A) Saved by grace thru faith apart from works – But our faith is a faith that works { Evidenced

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Workmanship = masterpiece / poemia – poem / work of art – Saved for a God ordained purpose

B) Are you walking in the works that God created for you to be doing

1) Using gifts / using time ? { Or doing nothing w/ your life?

C) Should be doing something for God – Saved for that purpose

D) Awesome privilege – God uses us

This is where the Parable breaks down God – Unlike the Vineyard owner - doesn't need workers – He can do it Himself

A) But He has chosen to work through the likes of us

B) You have a work that you are called to!

**C) Life is not about making money – buying things
Life is about serving God**

This parable reminds us that it is never too late to start

A) You might be at five o'clock in your lifespan. You might be fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty years old.

B) You might be saying, "I've walked with the Lord for ten years and haven't done a thing for Him." Take heart! It's never too late.

C) Those who show up at five o'clock saying, "I'm ready—just point me in the right direction," have a definite job to fulfill in the vineyard.

Calling you today!