

## Parables of Luke, Lesson 8, February 25, 2020

### Matthew 20:1-15 –

--Is grace fair? No, most definitely not, and we need to be so thankful it isn't!

#### 1. Background and context.

- None of Jesus' parables were told in vacuum and understanding the context, in some cases, makes the difference between making a correct interpretation and missing is all together.
- **Matt.19:16** He's totally sold on a works salvation, so Jesus points out that based on belief, he wasn't going to heaven -**V. 20**
- This guy loved his riches more than he loved God or his neighbor=breaking the two greatest commandments in the Scriptures.
- With the knowledge that it was impossible to merit God's favor, the disciples wonder about their own sacrifices for the kingdom,
- Does God just not consider our good works at all??
- Does our sacrifices for Him and His cause amount to nothing???
- They had left everything: **VV. 27-29** – there would be rewards and blessings both in this life and in the next because of their sacrifices.
- Jesus returns their attention back to what needed their main focus first (before there can be any discussion about rewards, we must understand how tremendous the grace of God and the gift of eternal life is.)
- The question posed by the disciples means they understand themselves to be among these that were called out first. They had paid some of the biggest prices for the kingdom.

#### 2. Is Grace Fair?

- Our parable is bracketed by this proverb: **19:30** and **20:15** – a proverb or Maxim.
- Proverbs are often like a riddle; this one is more of riddle than most.
- Sort of like a revolving door at large hotel; those going in become those going out and those going out become those going in—one revolution into it and they are all the same.
- It's a convoluted way to say, "everybody will be treated the same at some level."
- This is story of salvation and the grace that brought that salvation to us; it's not about earthly things but is based on a **salvation economy**.

#### 3. The Harvest season.

- Harvest season is often used as an illustration of our salvation and entering into eternity: **Matt. 13:24-30; Rev. 14**
- In most cases, we are the ones being harvested, but in this case, **we** are the harvesters.
- The picture that is given to us in this parable is one of the Fall grape harvest, when a landowner would need practically every hand, he could find to get the grapes off the vines and into processing.
- Day laborers would gather at the marketplace in whatever community was closest with hopes of being hired.
- V. 1 – takes place before 6 am, the typical workday was 12 hours from 6 to 6.
- Denarius – This was a day's pay for a Roman soldier, it was considered a respectable living wage.
- Typically, a day laborer would only receive a fraction of that for his unskilled labor.
- Day laborers were in no position to negotiate because if they didn't work, they didn't eat—competition was fierce.
- This was a more than fair wage for 12 hours of work, in fact it would have been considered quite generous.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> hour crew = 9 am are not even given a promise of a wage but only "what is right"
- From here on you get the impression that owner does not need the workers as much as he needs them—in fact he probably hired all the workers he needed to get the job done back at 6am.
- 6h hour = 12pm.

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- 9<sup>th</sup> hour = 3pm
- 11<sup>th</sup> hour = 5 pm! They only work one hour, but it was better than making absolutely nothing all day long

### 4. Pay time.

- Notice: they are all paid at the end of the day, this was the standard for day laborers.
- The order that he pays them wouldn't have been so unusual except for the fact that the one-hour workers receive a full denarius for their work.
- We are now intersected with our proverb: the last ones are the first ones to get paid.
- Those that worked the full 12 hours – receive a full denarius as well, seems unfair doesn't it??
- Was he being unfair? They got what they agreed to and that was a more than fair price for a day's work.
- **But they are sore about** it: He wasn't unfair with them; he was just generous with the rest.
- They had lost sight of the owner's kindness to them because he was the same kind to the seemingly less deserving.
- But they weren't deserving of their pay either!!
- The end result is that they all end up the same
- The point of the proverb is the utter equality that there will be in the kingdom.

### 5. Application

- The Owner = God, He already owns it all, He doesn't have to plant or harvest, He is set for all eternity.
- The Owner has made his life harder by just having fields and needing them to be worked and harvested.
- He doesn't need the income, but the laborers need the pay.
- God is motivated by our need and not His own.

1. Salvation is not earned – it is gift that is given purely by God's sovereign will.

- The main point of parable is that God gives the same abundant grace to whoever comes to Him.
- The laborers came into the work of kingdom strictly because of the Owner's sovereign choice—He went and found them—you didn't find Jesus, He found you!

2. Our salvation is utterly equal – We are all saved to uttermost **Heb. 7:24-25**

- We all receive the whole thing: **Rom. 8:17**
- We all are blessed with the same spiritual blessings in Christ: **Eph. 1:4-7**
- We are all going live in the same house: **Jn. 14:1-5**
- We are all the Bride, and all have the Same Bridegroom
- We all are unworthy of all of it—the least sinner and greatest sinner are the same, the longest worker and the shortest worker are equally unworthy of Gods generosity.
- The thing that will overwhelm us there is our shear unworthiness and God's complete grace toward us.

3. God establishes the terms of our salvation – the workers came in on the gracious terms of the landowner.

4. God calls those who are needy – not the self-sufficient.

5. God keeps His promises – God never gives less than He promises, and He often gives far more.

**Eph. 3:20**

6. All who came into the owner's vineyard worked – Work doesn't save us, but those who are saved work! You will be known by what you do.

7. A sense of humility is the right attitude – a sense of unworthiness is the only right way to think.

- Every day we aren't in Hell is a good day, but that He will give us the kingdom is mind blowing!