

Laborers in the Vineyard

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew, to the 20th chapter, Matthew 20, and today we'll be looking at verses 1 through 16.

So Matthew 20, verses 1 through 16 is where we are. Let's read together, beginning in verse 1.

And to them he said, They said to him, Because no one has hired us.

He said to them, You go into the vineyard too. 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.

And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarius.

[1 : 47] And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, 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.

But he replied to one of them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?

So the last will be the first, and the first will be last. Let's pray together. Lord, we again ask for your Spirit's help as your word is open, that you would make your word clear.

Again, with Jesus speaking in parables, we know that there's mystery involved. But for those who believe, it's meant to be clear. And we pray that that would be true. That you would reveal the meaning of this.

[2 : 49] That you would drive it home into our hearts. And that we would live in light of this. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Now, you may remember where we were last week, if you were here.

But in many ways, Jesus is giving this parable as somewhat of an explanation of what we talked about last week. So if you will, look back with me, verse 19 of chapter 19.

I'm sorry. Go back to chapter 19, the last verse, verse 30. We read there, But many who are first will be last, and the last first. And so we see that same phrase then repeated in verse 16 of chapter 20.

So the last will be first, and the first last. And so Jesus' own summary at the very end of this parable is the same words that he just said at the end of chapter 19.

And so we really see that this parable is given to us to help us to understand what does Jesus mean when he says that the first will be last, and the last will be first. And so even as we begin looking at this, and we think of how do we understand this, we have to understand it in light of Jesus explaining this has something to do with understanding how the first will be last, and the last will be first.

[4 : 00] There are blessings to following Christ. We looked at that last week. We saw Jesus speaking to them, Peter, about the blessings that they will receive.

But we don't follow Christ out of obligation. We don't follow Christ either primarily because we think we're going to get blessing out of it. What this parable teaches us is that all the blessings that he gives are free gifts from him, free gifts from God, which he bestows however he deems best.

He decides how he wants to give his gifts out. And this inevitably means that we will not always understand how God gives out gifts. Just imagine if you were, maybe this isn't a good exercise, but if you were to think of even in our own church, we try to assess other people perhaps, and we think, how might God bless them?

And we see holiness in them. We think, oh, God's going to bless them. And maybe other people we see very little in. And we are so poor judges of this. God knows our hearts. And part of what's being revealed in this is that we're not going to get it right.

We're not going to be able to assess it correctly, that God will take some people who we thought of as last, and they will be made first. And others who we thought of who were first may well be last.

[5 : 17] And so we have some teaching here that we're not going to understand things, that it's not going to look exactly how we expect it to. And so we want to understand that as well as we begin looking at the parable.

And so what I want us to do is really think about what is Jesus teaching the parable, and what is the lesson that's meant to be communicated to us? What's the lesson that's taught to us? And the first thing we see about the parable is really just the idea of it being unfair or seeming unfair to the workers.

So unfair rewards. Is it really unfair? And that's what I want us to look at first. Well, the workers struggle because the payments seem unjust. Maybe if we were to think about this in terms of numerical terms, this might make more sense to all of us.

So imagine you got hired for a job, and the job's paying \$10 an hour. Regardless of what you think about \$10 an hour, that's just easier to do math for me. So bear with me, \$10 an hour. And so you're hired \$10 an hour, and someone else is then hired after you, and they're hired \$20.

Or maybe I could say it a different way. You're hired \$100 a day. And someone else is hired for \$100, but they only have to work for six hours instead of eight hours. And someone else gets paid \$100 a day, and they only have to work four hours a day.

[6 : 32] And then someone else gets paid \$100 a day, and they only have to work two. So you can begin doing the math. Someone's making \$50 an hour. Maybe one guy only works one hour. He's making \$100 an hour. And here you are.

You're making \$12.50 or whatever that works out to be. It actually works out to be \$12.50. Okay. So \$12.50 is what you're making, and somebody else is making \$100 an hour, and you're doing the same job. Not only that, they only have to work one hour of the day, and you have to work all day.

So they get to rest at home. They get a little bit more free time, a little bit more freedom in their job, while you're having to be there all the time, and you're making the same amount. Your paycheck looks the same at the end of the week. Now, if we just think about that, apart from Jesus' parable, how many of us would think that's a fair work environment?

I thought about, think of it in our day and age, what would happen? There would be discrimination lawsuits. I'm being discriminated against. This isn't right. He's showing favoritism to that worker over me. I mean, you could imagine what it would be like in our day.

And so we ought not be surprised to see the response of the workers. They think it's unfair. The hourly wages here seem drastically different. And so, as it were, they filed a discrimination lawsuit with the landowner, the master.

[7 : 45] Well, who are the workers? How do we understand the parable? What is it that Jesus is teaching? I think there are two simple explanations for who the workers are. In light of what I think we see in the Gospels, my guess is that Jesus has both in mind.

And the first is Jews and Gentiles. And the second would be Christians who were saved early in their life versus Christians saved late in life. And so I want to take some time and kind of go work us through both of those.

First, Jews and Gentiles. You guys have heard, you're probably familiar with the idea of the Gospel mystery. The Gospel mystery was the inclusion of the Gentiles and the hardening of the Jews.

So if we look at the Old Testament, we see God's chosen one nation amongst all the nations of the world that he's shown his favor to, that he's working to save people in that nation. And every now and then, we see things like reluctant missionaries like Jonah, who goes to Nineveh, and all Nineveh repents and believes.

And we see people like Ruth who were brought in. And so we have these occasional instances of Gentiles being brought in. It's not exclusive, but primarily, Jesus is, excuse me, God's favor is upon the Jews.

[8 : 53] Salvation is for the Jews. And so if you were a Jewish person living in that day, your expectation would be, if I were to ask you, who do you think is going to get saved a hundred years from now? What would you say?

Odds are it's going to be a Jewish person. And so the expectation ongoing was that God's working to save Jews. But the gospel mystery is that Jews in their sinfulness are hardened and reject the Messiah in large, not exclusively.

We see the disciples and even we think of the 70 and larger groups that are following Jesus. But the Jewish people are primarily rejecting Jesus. And the gospel goes out to the Gentiles and the Gentiles are brought into the kingdom.

And so we have passages like Ephesians 3, 4 through 6. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ. Which was not made known to the sons of men and other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. And so as we think about this parable, we see that one thing that Jesus is probably doing is preparing them for the inclusion of the Gentiles.

[10 : 07] He's very well pointing toward that. So to put it in terms of our parable, the Jews are called into the vineyard first. If we think of the vineyard as the kingdom of God, they're brought into the kingdom as kingdom laborers.

They're working for God and his kingdom in terms of the history of the world way earlier than anyone else. They're the ones who were brought in in the first hour. And now we think of Jesus is coming, ushering in the eschaton, the end of the ages.

And so Jesus is coming, has ushered this in, and so even as Jesus comes, we're talking about it's the 11th hour. This is it. Now we know the 11th hour has gone on for 2,000 years now. But we're in the very end of time.

And now in the last hour, the Gentiles are being brought in? And they weren't a part of it before. And so you can understand why the Jews might have a tendency to think, we're hot stuff.

We were here first. We're the big dog. Who are you guys? And it's not fair that we've been laboring for generations. We've been trusting in God. And now you're going to come and you're going to get the same blessings as me.

[11 : 14] This doesn't seem right. In fact, in Acts 11, Peter is confronted for eating with Gentiles in Cornelius' home.

You may remember the whole instance. Peter would think it's wrong to eat these foods that had been previously declared unclean. He would think it's wrong to go into the house of a Gentile. And then God gives him a vision.

And they come and they call him. Peter goes and eats in Cornelius' house. But then other Jews criticize him. How can you eat in a Gentile's home? And Peter's response is he refers to them receiving the Holy Spirit.

And he says, If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? When they heard these things, they fell silent.

And they glorified God saying, Then to Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life. If we think about the payment here, the denarius, the day's wages, what are we speaking of here?

[12 : 14] Well, Jesus began by saying the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house. And so without question, we might think of the denarius as the kingdom itself or admitted into the kingdom.

They're receiving the kingdom. They're receiving salvation and blessings. But we have to include all that's included there. And with that, we would include what Peter includes, the Holy Spirit, repentance, and faith.

And so Peter's estimation, even though Peter's here, he hears Jesus' parable, his teaching, when the time comes to interact with Gentiles, he won't even eat in their home. He won't defile himself with them until he's persuaded by God through a vision to go do so.

And then afterwards, his response to others is, they received the same Holy Spirit. Maybe if he were thinking of Jesus' parable, he might say, but they got paid a denarius also.

How can I say they're not in the kingdom? The master of the house has paid them the same wages. He's given them the same Holy Spirit. He's given them repentance. He's given them faith. How can we stand in their way?

[13 : 18] And the response of the Jews is what? Well, we heard what they said. Then to Gentiles also, God has granted repentance that leads to life. But it said before that, and they glorified God saying that.

And so they rejoice that God's included them in. So Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

That's what Peter said in Acts 11. I'm sorry, that's back in the Ephesians story, what Paul said. Fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

And so, I think part of what Jesus is communicating is, understand the Gentiles are going to be brought in. And some who were first will end up being last, and some who come in last will end up being first.

And so, if we think of it in terms of a temporal thing, it's not about what part of human history you got into the kingdom that makes you great.

[14 : 15] That's not what determines greatness in the kingdom. And so, don't brag about being saved before someone else as if that somehow makes you special. If we think about it in terms of that way, we see that it applies not only to the idea of in human history, but also in the life of an individual.

And so, we had just a couple weeks ago an 8-year-old and an 11-year-old share their testimony. And we ought to rejoice that God's working in young people. But at the same time, we have to be careful not to think, well, if I was saved when I was young, I became a Christian when I was 8, personally.

Does that make me better than someone who is saved when they're 60? And I think, and I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit, but part of what Jesus is communicating to us is that the same is true also in terms of age, that there will be some people who are saved late in life who may end up surpassing those who are saved early in life.

That maybe we dwindled away the time we had. We didn't really use it for the kingdom. And others desire to serve God more fervently. And we're not to judge based on those kind of things.

Let me step back before I talk more about the age difference and say that we want to think about this in light of what we saw back in chapter 18. Now remember, Jesus has moved on.

[15 : 28] This is a separate teaching opportunity. But do you remember what we were looking at in chapter 18? This would be great if I could really test you guys to see. Do you still remember where we were a month ago?

What was Matthew 18, 1? Remember, the disciples were arguing over what? Who's the greatest in the kingdom? They want to know who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom.

And remember, from that, we moved on to Jesus brings a child in their midst and says, unless you become like this child, you're not even getting into the kingdom. And then he goes on and he talks about faith like a child, a dependence upon God, not the arrogance or the pride or the independence that the disciples were demonstrating.

And so think about that in light of where we are now. We just had the rich-owned ruler come, and what was the basis upon which the rich-owned ruler wanted into the kingdom?

Obedience to the law, or we might say just broadly worse. What must I do to be saved? What good deed, he even said, must I do to get into the kingdom?

[16 : 31] And remember, Jesus lays out the Ten Commandments. He says, he lays out the second table of the law. He says, I got that. Got it covered. And then Jesus brings in coveting. Get rid of all you have.

And he walks away. He's sad. And remember Peter's response, and again, I think Peter's the spokesperson for the disciples. They're all chattering and like, this guy doesn't get it. But we did, didn't we?

And so Peter goes to Jesus and says, what about us? You told him he'd have great treasure and blessing if he would sell all he had. Sell all your physical blessings to receive spiritual blessings that surpass those.

We did that. That's what we did. We got rid of it. Jesus, you know we sold everything and we followed you. What do we get? And what does Jesus say? I mean, he talks about blessings, doesn't he?

Let's go back there for a second. Matthew 19, verses 28 and 29. Jesus said to them, truly I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[17 : 36] This is great news, isn't it, for the disciples? They're like, we are getting a throne, finally. Verse 29, and everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my namesake will receive a hundredfold, and we talked about in Mark, it even specifies in this life a hundredfold, and then in the life that comes eternal life.

And so Jesus has spoken to them of great blessings. But what does Jesus follow that up with? But many who are first will be last and last will be first. What? We're going to have all these great blessings.

What do you mean the first will be last and the last will be first? And so then he gives this parable and he ends it the same way, and so Jesus is still dealing with somewhat of the same problem. So I want us to see this in the context of arguments over who's going to be great.

The disciples are still thinking who's going to be great in the kingdom. They just found out they're getting thrones. Pretty awesome. You know, we're going to be really great in the kingdom. We have connections. I want to read to you Revelation 2, 26.

And verse 3, 21. 2, 26 and following. And then chapter 3, verse 21. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.

[18 : 54] Let me just pause. Who receives authority over the nations? What? I didn't give you guys, I mean, some of you said something. Who receives authority over the nations? It says, those who keep my works until the end.

Who keeps his works until the end? Christians. That's how we're going to know they're Christians in some ways because until the end they remain faithful. Not because they are faithful in themselves, but God works to persevere them.

He holds them. So, those who persevere to the end are those whose hearts have been changed by the Spirit, who God has saved. And so, if I were to interpret this, what he just says is, to the Christians, I will give them authority over the nations.

What symbolizes authority over nations? Those who sit in authority sit on thrones, don't they? He goes on and says, and he will rule them with a rod of iron as when earth and pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

So, you're going to receive authority like the authority that Jesus has received from the Father, Jesus' authority from the Father is over all the nations. And I will give him the morning star.

[20 : 08] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And then, chapter 3, verse 21, the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

So, we read this in Revelation. And I've already argued in what I've said that I think Revelation is speaking about all Christians. Those who conquer, those who press on to the end, those who remain faithful are going to sit on thrones and rule over the nations.

And so, in light of that, my argument last week was that even though we do see some references in Revelation to the idea of the 24 elders and it pointing to the idea of 12 from the Old Testament, 12 from the New Testament, is this specifically the disciples?

Are the disciples going to sit on thrones? And I acknowledge that could be a possibility, but my argument back then was that what he's speaking of is the blessings for Christians. Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mothers will receive these blessings.

And what we see in Revelation, I think, points to this reality as well. And so, what I see Jesus doing is telling Peter and the disciples, you're going to have great blessings, you're going to sit on thrones, you're going to receive a hundredfold in this life and in the life to come you're going to have eternal life.

[21 : 27] Isn't that awesome? But understand, it's not because you're the 12 disciples. It's not because even you were saved before others that you're first in. In fact, those who come after you are going to receive the same blessing.

They're going to get the same wages as you got even though you came before them. Don't envy them. Don't be jealous of them. I think there's a correlation here to the prodigal son.

they receive the inheritance and he's embittered at his brother who wasted. And even that his father would welcome him back in, there's envy for this brother.

And I think Jesus is warning the disciples that cannot be our response. And so too then as we think of it in light of what I've spoken of of ages, then we understand as well that it's not ultimately about what age you get saved at that makes you somehow greater than others.

That's not what's going to determine greatness. In fact, we're going to receive the same reward in heaven. And yet also we see scripture speaking of there being greater reward as well. So there's, maybe we think there's the same baseline reward that we're all getting in heaven.

[22 : 36] We're all going to receive eternal life. In this world we'll receive a hundredfold. But what we have to understand as well that there's people like the thief on the cross who will be saved in the last hour of their life and they're not somehow going to be deficient.

They're not going to get to heaven and be like, oh man, I got gypped. And granted when we're in heaven we won't have this attitude but is there part of us that thinks it's unfair that the thief would be saved late in life?

He got to live however he wanted to and only at the end did he get saved. I follow the Lord all my life. Don't I receive more blessing? I've turned down sinful desires.

I've waged war against the flesh. And what's the reality if we think that way? You know we sometimes talk about we live in a Catholic town and how Catholicism has in many ways combined grace with works.

and so you contribute to your own salvation. And we talk about the identifying characteristic of Protestant churches should be that salvation is by grace alone. But when we have the mentality that I've served God for 70 years I'm up here as a Christian and received greater rewards from the Lord and the thief on the cross he's lucky he's getting in it all.

[24 : 09] What are we saying? The thief on the cross may be getting in solely by grace but I'm getting in it by grace and 70 years worth of work. We're imagining even though we think we were saved by grace that we can contribute and earn for ourselves greater reward based on our good deeds.

I would say this is that Peter in particular is not that far off from the rich and ruler is he? The rich and ruler what good deeds must I do to be saved?

Peter says Jesus I did that to you thinking what the rich and ruler said Jesus says you've got to obey the commandments he goes I've done that my whole life great news and then Jesus kind of squashes him doesn't he when he says what about coveting go sell everything you have not doing that and so here comes Peter so Jesus has laid out the guidelines here's the commandments follow the commandments perfectly you get into the kingdom no one follows it perfectly no one gets in that way but then he says go sell all you have and follow me and you'll have rewards in heaven and Peter goes I've done that yep what do I get and so do you see that Peter's response is really not that far off from the rich and ruler he's still saying Jesus look what I've done what do I get in response to that and so my second major point in the message and really my last point other than the application is to say that what I see

Jesus teaching in this parable is that salvation is all of grace that our tendency is to look at what we've done and even things that we have no control over sometimes like the age at which we were saved or even whether or not our great grandparents were Christians how many generations of Christians are in our family versus your family we look at things that we have no control over and think we're better or we need to receive greater rewards before that and what Jesus wants Peter and the disciples to see is that it's all of grace and that too will help them prepare for the inclusion of the Gentiles in times to come don't look at this in a prideful arrogant way don't look at what you've done rather understand that it's all the rights of the owner asserted look at verse 13 but he replied to one of them friend I am doing you no wrong do you not agree with me for a denarius take what belongs to you and go

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you look at verse 15 am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me or do you begrudge my generosity now what's it speaking to us of well we know the master speaking of God and what we're told here is does God not have the right to do with what is his own however he sees fit and in eternity will there be one of us who can say to God you dealt with me wrongly you are unfair with me it's not one of us does the potter not have the right over the piece of clay to make it for whatever purpose he desires who are you oh man to say back to God why have you made me like this that's what he's getting in his message does not the master of the house have the right to pay whatever he wants to pay is it not all generosity was the master obligated to hire any of you no even if you're working for the kingdom what you're getting paid isn't your due still a gift of

[27 : 59] God by his right he gives it however he sees fit you see in verse 11 they actually grumble against him and on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house which when we think about the injustice of it that I talked about earlier do you see the injustice in this they signed a contract for a job they were hired for a job the job pays X amount of money at the end of the day they get paid X amount of money and they still grumble it sounded great to you at whatever time 6 o'clock this morning now it sits in the evening you're angry that you're getting paid for exactly what you agreed to work for but they grumble against the master and I think Jesus here is clearly addressing a present attitude that's working in the disciples and also a future attitude that they're going to have when the time in which Peter actually fellowships he eats with or he's hanging around Gentiles and then certain Jews come into town and

Peter stops it why because those Jews look down upon the Gentiles and so this attitude is going to continue Paul has to rebuke Peter for placating people with such attitudes and so Jesus is addressing this attitude in them but what you see in this not only is that salvation is all of grace but that God will never do us wrong verse 13 says I am doing you no wrong I think we have to understand that as well there's not one of us who saved that we're deserving of salvation and so for any of us in heaven it will all be of grace and even what about those in hell well they did work for it the wages of sin is death and so no matter what even I know this is so hard for us to comprehend sometimes but there are people in this life that we love who will die not loving the Lord not trusting God unsaved who may now even be in hell and there will come a day when we're in heaven where we will our attachment will be more closely to

God than it will be to our loved ones and we'll even be able to say that God has done them no wrong God has done right in this in fact it even speaks in heaven we're going to praise God for his words even the damnation of those who have rejected the Lord and as hard as that is for us to comprehend we have to see God has done no wrong the reason it's hard for us to comprehend because we think God is doing wrong to send people to hell but likewise there won't be one person in heaven who thinks I got cheated God hasn't done me well all of us will receive more than we deserve right there's none of us who deserve salvation Romans 9 14 what shall we say then and this is falling after the Potter thing that I quoted earlier is there injustice on God's part you hear Paul's response emphatically exclamation point by no means there can be no injustice with

God so grumbling and boasting are both excluded there's not one of us who can grumble against what God gives us there's not one of us who can boast in what God has given us unless we're boasting in the Lord so they're both excluded whatever Christ disciples receive it's all of grace all that enter the kingdom receive more than they deserve here's what Matthew Henry says he says the giving of a whole day's wages to those that had not done the tenth part of a day's work is designed to show that God distributes his rewards by grace and sovereignty and not of debt the best of the laborers and those that begin soonest having so many empty spaces in their time and their work not being filled up before God may truly be said to labor in the vineyard scarcely one hour of their twelve but because we are under grace and not under the law even such defective services done in sincerity shall not only be accepted but by free grace richly rewarded and

James Montgomery Boyce says it is a problem for any who think that because they have served God faithfully for however many years they deserve something from him we do not say I say it again we never deserve God's favors if we think we do we are in danger of losing them entirely I think that's a great summary of what Jesus is addressing here if you think you deserve this Peter disciples if you think you are deserving of this you are in danger of not getting it and go back to chapter 18 the child he brought in his midst will receive it as those who are completely dependent like the infant crying out to its parents so some Christians saved in life may attain to a higher spiritual standing than some who have been saved much earlier in their life Peter who come later will likewise leave all will be equal to them maybe even surpass them we don't know how things will be understood in the kingdom it's easy for us to think well

[33 : 20] Peter he was a disciple there may be people we've never heard of people we have no knowledge of who will be ahead of Peter in the kingdom I think it's interesting if we look at verses 6 and 7 the workers that came at the very end in about the 11th hour when he went out and found others standing he said to them why do you stand here idle all day they said to him because no one has hired us he said to them you go into the vineyard too now let me just ask a question there there is people coming through they are waiting to get a job and the 11th hour there are still people sitting there he is no one will hire us how is it they get overlooked for 11 hours of the day let me just ask you if you were to assess the quality of these workers how good of workers do you think these guys are people had to be driving by saying not a chance

I'm hiring that guy he's not going to do and just for a second understand that if we think of it in terms of Jews and Gentiles that's you congratulations right you're the 11th hour worker but part of my point is to say is we understand it being all of grace these guys they're the bottom of the barrel in terms of workers and God's calling them into his kingdom and Jesus is bringing them into the kingdom and they're going to receive the same reward he's hidden his treasure in jars of clay that the surpassing worth will be his and not ours it's not the jar of clay that gets the glory is it it's a treasure that's hidden inside and so again I think we see a further display of God's grace and saving now I want to make just a few verses 6 and 7 about the eleventh hour he went out there's people still standing there why are you standing there he says because no one has hired us

I think if we just understand this in either sense in terms of the history of the world or in terms of the length of a person's lifetime this does not speak to us of what Jesus said of the fields be plentiful for the gospel hasn't reached them and God's going to draw them in late in life or late in terms of human history we think of the advance of the kingdom to the very ends of the earth there's still unreached people groups there are laborers who are standing there waiting for someone to bring them into the kingdom and that ought to excite our hearts to see the gospel go to see us go to take the gospel to the very ends of the earth but likewise there may be people even in our own town getting up there in age we prayed earlier for the nursing home ministry people in their 80s or 90s maybe even people in their 40s and 50s who haven't heard the gospel we ought to be those who are going drawing the laborers into the kingdom sharing the people in the 11th hour who haven't even heard yet no one has hired them so maybe if I were to stretch the parable a little bit we ought to be those going out hiring people for the kingdom we're

HR workers for the master of the house secondly I want you to see that our service to the Lord should be motivated for most by love for him and not reward that we hope to gain I said last week Jesus tells us there's great reward for you if you sell all you have and follow him and I said that's meant to motivate us but that's not primarily meant to be our motivation the concern is that that becomes our primary motivation and I think we can easily fall into the trap of Peter or maybe even the rich young ruler God has called us out of love for him think of enter the kingdom like a child out of love for your father we serve him we want to work for him and whatever we receive in heaven will be more than we deserve and there's not one of us who will grumble against our heavenly father and so serve him joyfully out of love for him not primarily out of the reward even though we know like the disciples arguing over who's the greatest the question over who's the greatest in the kingdom even in the church maybe even in your own family those questions ought not to enter our heads it ought to be my job is to serve the

Lord I want to serve him with all I have regardless of what I receive and again trusting that we know it will be more than we deserve thirdly I want to say that a prior sinful life does not exclude anyone from the kingdom I think sometimes there's a tendency to think that some people have lived too hard a life there's too much sin maybe even for too long if we think of the parable that they've gone on in age and now they are old man or old woman who never has served the Lord well I mentioned already the thief on the cross he's receiving capital punishment for his sin he's within minutes maybe hours at the most of his death and the Lord saves him and so I think it ought to encourage us that none are too old or too hard to be saved sometimes I think we're prone to give up on people well you know as old as they had heard the gospel before they rejected it before and we're scared to say anything to them and maybe this parable can encourage us to take the gospel to those who we think maybe are the least likely to be saved maybe even acknowledging that our attitude of thinking them least likely is in some way a reflection of us thinking we're more likely and we need to humble ourselves and see to take the gospel to others and then we well

[39 : 50] I think a conclusion from this is that we ought not postpone our following of Christ there's a tendency maybe as we hear this parable to think well if those who enter the kingdom late in life get the same reward as those who enter early in life then why don't I just wait till later in life I think I told you guys before Constantine who said he became a believer tried to bring the Roman Empire into Christianity and at the same time he asked that he not be baptized until he was on his deathbed now he believed in baptismal regeneration or at least the remission of sin through baptism that would wash him clean and he wanted to be able to keep sinning until he died now we'll talk more about this next week but I was so encouraged they said I want to be baptized later so

I can get some more sin in before that happens and we don't believe in baptismal regeneration so that's probably not our attitude instead it might be I believe the truth of the gospel but I'm not willing to make that public I'm not really willing to follow Christ until later in life I want to encourage you that that's a wrong attitude first and foremost none of us are guaranteed another day don't put that off thinking I'll deal with that later in my life Proverbs 27 1 says do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring we might have another day and a way of boasting about tomorrow may be well I'll believe in Jesus tomorrow I'll believe in him a few years from now James 4 13 15 says come now you who say today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring what is your life for you are a mist that appears for a little while then vanishes instead you ought to say if the

Lord wills we will do this or do that but our life is a mist who is here for an Jesus Lord let me first go and bury my father and Jesus said to him follow me and lead the dead to bury their own dead don't put it off Luke 9 carries that further in verse 61 it says yet another said I will follow you Lord but let me first say farewell to those at my home and Jesus said to him no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God so what are the things in our life that we say I'm not willing to follow Jesus yet for he warns us that if now is the favorable time behold now is the day of salvation again

I think that's speaking in terms of human history Christ has come now is the day of salvation but is that not true for us here today that today is the day of salvation we're not promised another day I want to encourage you don't put that off positively you come in you get the same blessing as the rest everlasting life with our heavenly father in heaven so we need to understand that the evening time to settle accounts like we see in the parable is coming for all of us and we do not know when death will bring us before the Lord but there will come a day when we stand before God as our judge and he's going to divvy out what we do he'll give us our pay and for those of you who put your trust in Jesus Christ I've said already it's a gift salvation is a gift your due wages all right but it's because of the work of Christ he's your righteousness and so what is it you've earned what are you depending upon is it

Christ is it your works maybe another question I could ask is if you're not a Christian today why have you put it off why wait any longer I encourage you to put your faith in Jesus Christ and enter into the kingdom and the blessings of the kingdom let's pray together dearly father in a room that's filled primarily with Gentiles we thank you that those that were hired in the hour received the reward to get the blessings Lord we thank you for your grace your mercy Lord help us not to try to assess things by our own eyes but leave things to you who judge the heart Lord let us not try to compare ourselves to others to see who's going to be first in the kingdom but Lord let us just be thankful that we're getting in you've showed grace to us and mercy through Christ we pray that you work in the hearts of for those of us who have who know those blessings who are waiting for that day that we enter into your presence

[45 : 24] Lord we pray that you would give us hearts that serve you out of love that we don't try to work that we might be greater than others but that we might magnify your name that we might make you great we pray this in Christ name amen