



Matthew 20:1-16
New International Version
Parable of the Landowner

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³ “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and **I will pay you whatever is right.**’ ⁵ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶ 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?’

⁷ “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

⁸ “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.’

⁹ “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² ‘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.’

¹³ “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶ “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”



Sermon Notes

PARABLES: GLIMPSES OF A NEW REALITY

The Parable asks “**Are you ready for Grace?**”

Beware: There is a subtle slide from a heart full of gratitude into a critical spirit of entitlement.

Life comes at God’s **Invitation**

V6 “He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing? Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.”

God dispenses **gifts** not **wages**

v12 “you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.”

Sinners and Saints both eat at the same table in the Kingdom.

The New Reality of **GRACE**

What separates gratitude from pride is **ENTITLEMENT**

What separates heaven from hell is **ENTITLEMENT**

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

“When we replace a sense of service and gratitude with a sense of entitlement and expectation, we quickly see the demise of our relationships, society, and economy.” — Steve Maraboli

LIVING WORD

The Purpose of Parables

“Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

(v. 17). - Matthew 13:12–17

What is the purpose of parables? Jesus tells us in Matthew 13:12–15 that He speaks in parables to hide the secrets of the kingdom from some and reveal them to others (Matt. 13:12–15). This does not mean His parables are full of esoteric information that only a select few can grasp with their minds. Christ’s enemies often understand exactly what His parables mean (see 21:33–46); the problem is their refusal to trust His teaching about Himself and God’s kingdom. The difficulty the Pharisees have is moral and thus volitional, not intellectual. They choose not to believe our Savior’s words. Those who take up their cross gain more access to kingdom truth; those who reject Him lose whatever insight they had (13:12). Matthew Henry says parables make the things of God “more plain and easy” to those willing to be taught, and “at the same time more difficult and obscure to those who [are] willfully ignorant.”

The word parable is a transliteration of the Greek word “parabole” (para-bow-LAY), and comes from two Greek words, “para” (translated “beside”) and “ballein” (translated “to throw”). Literally, the word parable means “to throw beside,” or “to place beside, or to place together for the purpose of comparing, or making a comparison.” They can usually be identified by the use of the word “like,” as in Jesus’ statement, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed,” or “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven” (Matthew 13:31, 33). In these examples, Jesus was comparing the kingdom of heaven to the attributes or characteristics of a mustard seed and to leaven (yeast). Some have defined the word parable as “a story by which something real in life is

used as a means of presenting a moral thought.” Others have said a parable “puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn.” They are usually a story or a narrative taken from nature or from everyday human experiences. Perhaps the most simple definition of all is that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.