

Matthew: Jesus, The King of Kings

## The Last Will Be First

Matthew 20:1-16

Previously:

- Rich young ruler
- Went away sorrowful - because of his possession
- What keeps us from following Jesus?
- Disciples say they've left all, what will they receive?

Leads into today's parable on God's economy, how he rewards

**How do you suppose heaven's rewards work when the streets are paved with gold?**

If the things we value most here are burned up, done away with, all is vanity

What will be the source of value in heaven?

**[Pray]**

**20:1-2**

**Matthew is a look at Jesus being the King of Kings  
And Jesus likes to teach on His Father's Kingdom**

Jesus is answering 19:27 "We have left all and followed You. Therefore, what shall we have?"

**The disciples were caught up in getting a reward, After all, they had left everything  
Which spot will they get in the earthly kingdom? remember the triumphal entry to come  
next chapter**

**Matthew 19:27-30 NKJV - Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" 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. "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. "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first.**

Jesus is telling this parable to explain the first and the last

**The First Shall Be Last**

It's a common saying in our society. We might say it when someone cuts US in line

### **The heavenly priority and order is in fact opposite of the earthly priority and order**

- What we call evil, God calls good
- What God calls good, we call evil
- What God tells us to value, the world says is worthless
- What the world says is most valuable, heaven says is dirt

### **Turn to 1st Corinthians 3**

#### **The Kingdom of heaven is like...**

Parables - earthly stories with heavenly meanings

Not a complete picture, but helps illustrate the point

**Landowner** - guy owns the land, God owns everything

Landowner goes out early to get laborers

**Early in the morning**, labor workday starts at 6am.

He's out there earlier looking for anyone looking to work

#### **Unskilled labor**

Probably doesn't take much skill to go through and pick the crop

Granted, someone with skill can do it faster

### **When you're hungry, you should be willing to do any kind of work**

**2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 NKJV - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But [as for] you, brethren, do not grow weary [in] doing good.**

#### **Day laborers,**

back east immigrants (legal and illegal) outside home depot in the mornings

**A denarius, basically a day's wages**

These work days were 12 hours

\$180 @ 15/hour

**But as we're about to see, there's plenty of work to go around...**

**:3-7**

**Landowner still going around. Not enough guys out before 6am,  
Now he tries 9am**

**Who's up? Who wants to work?**

This is why we have Daylight Savings Time,  
because you need light to get a head start on the day

**Do you start your day with light? Time with God in His Word?  
Your day will be different when you start it with Him, even if you sleep in.**

**They were standing idle! Not working!**

**Histemi** - stand ready, stand by, stand still, stand unharmed

***If we're honest, are we standing by, saying we're ready, but haven't gone out to the field of God because we're worried about being harmed? Financially, physically, emotionally?***

**argo** - free from labor, at leisure, lazy, "shunning the labor which one ought to perform"

They were standing around, maybe talking, laughing, playing cards, who knows - but they weren't even thinking of work until the landowner showed up

***If we're honest, are we not doing God's work because we prefer our leisure activities? We'd rather be at the beach than sharing the gospel? We'd skip out on church because the summer is warm and we'll go back when it's not so nice out?***

**But the landowner sends them out with the promise that they'll get what's right - they'll be paid. It'll be worth their time. They didn't have anything else going on today, so make hay while the sun shines.**

*There's something to be said about that kind of wisdom. Rest is good. But God only commands 1/7th of our week be rest. The REST is to work. Find ways to be profitable to God. To your family. For your business. For your finances.*

**Proverbs 27:23-27 NKJV - Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, [And] attend to your herds; For riches [are] not forever, Nor does a crown [endure] to all generations. [When] the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself, And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, The lambs [will provide] your clothing, And the goats the price of a field; [You shall have] enough goats' milk for your food, For the food of your household, And the nourishment of your maidservants.**

**Noon, 3pm, 5pm...**

“What have you been doing here all day? Go work, there’s work to be done!”

*Remember, this is a parable of God’s kingdom*

**There is a start to the harvest** - Jesus went out and called and made disciples  
The holy spirit came to empower  
There will come a day when the harvest happens - and time is up  
(We’ll look at this more in Matthew 24)

**There’s only so much you can get done in a day**

Don’t you hate wasting the day? Or a week? Or your life? YOu look back and wonder where the time went, the things you wanted to do didn’t get done.

**If you’re still breathing...there’s still time.**

**“Because no one hired us...”**

The whining of a lazy generation...

*This attitude bugs me a bit. I think it would bug most Montanans. Nobody would hire you? Who’s responsibility is it for you to work? Yours! So go find something to do. Start a business. Find ways to work. Get out there and find someone who will give you a job if needed. Don’t stand around waiting for them to show up. Go get it done yourself!*

Is not the church in the last days...lukewarm? Spiritually lazy?

**:8-9**

**Landowner tells his steward to pay everyone**

Remember Joseph

*Idea of good stewardship - being responsible and entrusted with more and more*

Luke 16:10-13 NKJV - "He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in [what is] least is unjust also in much. "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]? "And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Is it not Jesus who will bring us back in at the end of the day? Who will give us our reward? Who IS our reward?

### **Why last to first order?**

11th hour guys closest to the front of property maybe because they showed up last while the others worked and walked to the other end of the field

Again, day labor, you work the day, you get paid end of the day - not at the end of the week, month. Work now, get paid now.

The heavenly reward is immediate. It is received as soon as the day is complete.

The passage doesn't indicate everything was harvested.  
Only that the time for work was over.

John 9:4 NKJV - "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; [the] night is coming when no one can work.

There is a day coming when time is up.

That it is.

What is chosen is chosen. What is done is done.

Those who will believe have believed. Those who have rejected will have rejected.

Individually I believe we have every chance until we die...but maybe by that time we've hardened our hearts so much the time already passed

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 NKJV - We then, [as] workers together [with Him] also plead with [you] not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.

The age of the church will end. The world and all it's systems will end. Tribulation will commence. And decisions will be sealed prior to judgment.

**The work of sharing the gospel is never finished...until the harvest. And when the harvest comes, that's it. What is taken is taken and the rest burned.**

**The 11th hour guys...worked an hour AT most**

(he found them at 5pm, walk to the field, start picking, 6pm rolls around and they're called in for money)

**Paid for the whole day.** Same agreement as with the guys who were morning people.

**:10-12**

**The first get back to the office...**

Oh, the 11th hour guys got a full day's pay, we must be getting more now!

Nope!

**"Us who have born the burden and the heat of the day"**

**They did the bulk of the work!**

**And it got hot!**

These guys showed up when it was starting to cool off!

**They again were called in when the day was over -  
not all of the vineyard was harvested**

**There were still grapes left out there - but they would not be taken in**

Sure, they got more done - but it's not like they did more percentage of the entire vineyard  
Not everything the landowner wanted done was finished.

*Pencils down!*

*It's as if we all were taking a history test. Some showed up later. Some earlier. But we weren't scored on the number of questions we answered, but on how many we got right. If you did one and got one right, A+, if you did 100 and got 100 right, A+.*

**This reward was about:**

1. Heeding the landowner's call to go into the vineyard and work
2. Working until the day was done and the landowner called you back out of the field
3. Receiving what the Landowner promised to pay ... what is right

**This reward was not about:**

1. When you started working, only about giving it your all until time was up
2. How many grapes you picked
3. How far into the field you got
4. What your hourly rate is and your effort accomplishes

**Only that you hear, go and work**

**Matthew 9:35-38 NKJV - Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly [is] plentiful, but the laborers [are] few. "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

**Acts 20:24 NKJV - "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."**

**1 Timothy 5:18 NKJV - For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer [is] worthy of his wages."**

**:13-15****Friend...**

**John 15:12-16 NKJV - "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."**

**The landowner hadn't done anything wrong.** The laborer was fine with a day's wage when he was hired. It was only when he saw someone else, getting the same wage, for doing less work.

***When someone else is saved, do we judge? Are we happy? Are we angry?***

*Some notorious people are getting saved lately - from awful lifestyles, professions (work and word), and many Christians look on and scoff...as if to say, "How dare God save them and use*

*them when they'd been so awful."*

*Do we forget who Paul was before? Saul. A murderer of the church.*

*We'd do well to read Jonah...*

**Take what is yours. Your reward is your reward.**

**What the landowner pays is up to him.**

**It's not a spite against you to pay someone else what he wants to pay them.**

*Guzik: Grace leads to surprise...The system of law is easy to figure out: you get what you deserve. The system of grace is foreign to us: God deals with us according to who He is, not according to who we are.*

**In effect, the landowner is not looking to profit by withholding reward.**

**He's got a lot of reward to give to anyone willing to work.**

**Is Your eye evil because I am good?**

Payday, prizes, rewards - all do well to reveal what kind of worker we are

Are we thankful? Entitled? Understanding?

*If the job habitually underpays you, undervalues you - you can go work somewhere else  
If you care about the job and they care about you - if profits are low and they can't give you the  
bonus - it'll reveal how you really think about the job and your boss*

**God pays what is right**

Righteous, guiltless, virtuous, what is due

**Do we not think that if we do what God wants us to do, He'll take care of us?**

Maybe, like the rich young ruler, we're just in love with our lifestyle, our possessions, our positions - and know that they're in the way, idols - and it upsets us to think about losing them - we know God won't pay for the Gucci and he'll have us in Great Value.

*DGC v. Living under grace is sort of a two-edged sword. Under grace, we can't come to God complaining, "Don't I deserve better than this"; because God will reply, "Does this mean that you really want Me to give you what you deserve?"*

**Matthew 6:28-34 NKJV - "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith? "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or**

**'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.**

**2 Timothy 2:6 NKJV - The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.**

**Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV - Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**:16**

### **Last First, First Last**

- The least in the world's eyes into the kingdom
- We esteem men on outside, god on inside (james partiality, god looks on heart)
- John the baptist least of all the saints
- The people in the last days in a sense will be the first to see the kingdom
- The rich man who gives up all or the poor man who gains everything to follow God both are rewarded the same ...

### **Many Called, Few Chosen**

**God calls everyone to follow Him. Not everyone will.**

**Everyone hears. Only some listen.**

**Many follow, but stop short**

This does not mean that God only saves the elect or only calls certain people

Granted, if someone doesn't want to be called, he will respect their wishes

But the calling and choosing are all about grace

**But you. You've heard the calling. He's calling right now.**

**Matthew 11:29-30 NKJV - "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light."**

**Will you let Him harvest you?**

If you're apart of His harvest, will you go out into the field and work?

**Rom 13:11-12 And [do] this, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation [is] nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**