



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of July 28, 2024

Sermon Text: Matthew 20:1-16

[1] “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. [2] After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4] and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ [5] So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ [7] They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ [8] 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.’ [9] And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. [10] Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. [11] And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, [12] 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.’ [13] But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14] Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. [15] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ [16] So the last will be first, and the first last.”

1. Although it may make earthly sense that the “early hires” deserved more than the “late hires” because they worked longer, how does this kind of reasoning show a lack of understanding of God’s “grace”?
2. From an earthly human perspective, who do we usually associate with being “first”, and who do we consider to be “last”? Why do you think God wants to turn this way of thinking upside down, so the last will be first, and the first last?
3. In Jesus’ story, the denarius represented the payment or the reward given to the laborers. What reward or payment do you think mankind deserves from God? What reward/payment does God give to those whom He chooses to bring into His kingdom? Based on your answer, should we really want life to be fair? Explain.
4. Does this passage mean that Christians should never expect life to be fair? Explain your answer.
5. What perspective change is needed so that we don’t begrudge the “late hires”? (Perhaps a better way to ask this question is, from *whose* perspective should we view this story?)