

Matthew 20:1-16

¹“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘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.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Philippians 1:21-30

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — ³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Tell me about fairness. What are your thoughts on it? How does this play into our interactions with others?

Matthew Questions:

- Who are “the last” and “the first” mentioned in Matthew 19:30 and again in Matthew 20:16?
- How did you feel later on when you were paid the same thing?
- Suppose you were one of the latecomers?
 - How did you feel about the situation?
- How did those who worked for twelve hours think and feel about their pay in comparison to what one-hour crew was paid?
 - Was their reaction justified? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the owner of the vineyard? Are they just? Generous? A good business person?
- How does this relate to the kingdom of heaven?
- Is it better to be an early riser or a late comer in the kingdom of heaven?
- Who do you identify with in the story - the early risers? the late comers? Why?
- What type of person needs to hear this story the most?
- What do you think Jesus’ intent was in telling it?
- How would you apply this story to your life?
- Tell me again about fairness.

Philippians Questions:

- So what phrase do you want on your tombstone? Would verse 21 be a good representative of your life and/or hope? Why or why not?
- What does “Death is Gain” mean?
- Why do you suppose Paul was writing on these kinds of subjects to the Philippian Christians?
- What does living our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ mean? I mean really mean?
 - How might our lives be out of sync with the Gospel?
 - What needs work?
 - What might need to be done to course correct?
- According to this passage, what are some ways unity plays a role in the spread of the gospel?
 - How have you seen disunity hinder the spread of the gospel?
- What would you hear preached from these texts?