

Workers in the Vineyard

(Matthew 20:1-16)

In the verses above Jesus tells the parable of the “workers in the vineyard.” This is one of the more interesting and intriguing parables of Jesus. It is a parable that teaches us several things about those who make up the kingdom of heaven.

I. Breaking down the parable:

- A. There was a **landowner** (vs. 1). This is a wealthy man who owns a vineyard.
- B. The landowner hired **workers** for his vineyard (vss. 1-7).
 1. He hired some people early in the morning and agreed to pay them a denarius (the standard day’s wage for a common worker during that time).
 2. He also other people at various points throughout the day. He hired some at the third hour (9:00 a.m.) the sixth hour (noon), the ninth hour (3 p.m.), and the eleventh hour (5 p.m.). He found these people looking for work at the market place.
- C. He paid the workers the **same** (vss. 8-10). Those who started working early in the morning got paid the same as those who started late.
- D. Those who worked longer were **upset** with their pay (vss. 11-12).
 1. They grumbled against the landowner.
 2. They felt they should have been paid more because they worked longer.
- E. The landowner **defended** his actions (vss. 13-15).
 1. He reminded them of the agreement. They were paid what was promised!
 2. He also reminded them of how he owned the land and had the right to pay others however he pleased. As long as he kept his promise to them, it should have made no difference what he paid the other workers.

II. What can we learn about the kingdom of heaven?

- A. The kingdom of heaven has **equality** .
 1. God treats all of His workers the same. He rewards them all the same.
 2. This was a message that the Jews needed to understand (Acts 10:34-35).
- B. The kingdom of heaven is for the **humble** .
 1. It is for people who know they are not better than others (Matthew 20:24-28).
 2. It is for those who are willing to be last by the standards of the world to be first in the eyes of God (Matthew 19:30; Matthew 20:16).
 3. It is for those who understand that they can’t earn the reward that God gives (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9).
- C. The kingdom of heaven is for the **grateful** .
 1. The early workers in the parable were not grateful for what the landowner had given them. They were too concerned with getting more than the others.
 2. We can avoid this problem if we truly understand how great our reward from God is and how none of us can earn it (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Conclusion:

1. Are you part of God’s kingdom?
2. Like the landowner in the parable, God is still inviting people to work in His vineyard. He is ready to reward any who will submit to Him. Will you accept His invitation?