

Kingdom Parables – Week 6 Discussion Questions

The Vineyard Mt. 20:1-16

1. Tell about a time you tried out for, auditioned for, applied for, or ran for something and got it. How did you react? What did it feel like?
2. Tell about a time you tried out for, auditioned for, applied for, or ran for something and did *not* get it? How did you react? What did it feel like?

Read the parable in Matthew 20:1-16

3. What is unusual about the landowner's hiring practices, compensation program, and benefits package? What does this parable teach us about God?
4. In this parable there are 5 groups of workers hired at different times. What do you think they represent?
5. How do you think the last group (those who only worked 1 hour) felt about their compensation in comparison to how the first group (those who worked 12 hours) felt about theirs?
6. Which of the 5 groups do you most identify with when it comes to your faith journey?
7. The people in the first group believe their compensation should be directly proportional to their work. They got exactly what they were promised, yet they grumbled and complained because they didn't think they had been treated fairly. How does the resentful spirit of the first group impact how they viewed the other groups? How do you think the other groups might have felt when they heard the complaints of the first group?
8. Thinking about the church *today*, who would be the people in the first group? How are we tempted to overlook God's blessings because we are focused on what we *think* we deserve? Because we are focused on others? When have you seen a grumbling, complaining spirit hurt the health and life of a congregation?
9. Looking at things from their standpoint, how might you sympathize with the workers in the first group? What can you do to slow down the pace of your life and make space for noticing, celebrating, and being grateful for the blessings of God?
10. How do you imagine the workers in the final group felt about the landowner? How do you imagine they reacted? How do you imagine the complaints by workers in the first group made them feel?
11. Thinking about the church *today*, who would be the people in the later groups? The last group? In what ways are people made to feel excluded or unwelcome in the church today? How might this impact their relationship with God?
12. Describe a time when you have experienced or been deeply aware of God's grace in your life. Why do you think it is so easy for us to forget that we have all been shown grace equally? What can we do to remind ourselves of God's grace and provision in our lives?
13. Name 3 or 4 gifts God has given you in just the last week that you are grateful for.

Matthew 20:1-16

Workers in the vineyard

20 “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² After he agreed with the workers to pay them a denarion, he sent them into his vineyard.

³ “Then he went out around nine in the morning and saw others standing around the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I’ll pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵ And they went.

“Again around noon and then at three in the afternoon, he did the same thing. ⁶ Around five in the afternoon he went and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you just standing around here doing nothing all day long?’ ⁷ “‘Because nobody has hired us,’ they replied. “He responded, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

⁸ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and moving on finally to the first.’ ⁹ When those who were hired at five in the afternoon came, each one received a denarion. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarion. ¹¹ When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² ‘These who were hired last worked one hour, and they received the same pay as we did even though we had to work the whole day in the hot sun.’

¹³ “But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I did you no wrong. Didn’t I agree to pay you a denarion? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I want to give to this one who was hired last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Don’t I have the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you resentful because I’m generous?’ ¹⁶ So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last.”