



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE MATTHEW 20:1-16

LESSON: GOD'S GRACIOUS REWARDS — August 20, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

19:16-30 In Matthew this passage opens up with not knowing the man's name or title of the person that comes running to Jesus, but Jesus knows all about him. He had just seen how Jesus valued the little children and told His disciples "Let the children come unto Him, and do not hinder them, for to such belong the kingdom of heaven" (19:14). So, the man comes and calls Jesus "Good Master", asking for spiritual help and questioning Jesus as to how he could obtain "Eternal Life" (19:16). He was told to keep God's commandments (19:17). The young man goes back and forth about the commandments, which leads to "I've done all those. What do I lack?" (19:20). Jesus from the beginning says why call me "Good" (19:17), because Jesus knew his thoughts, since he followed the commandment since his youth (19:20), he thought he knew what "good" was. Jesus says "huh huh" so, you want to be "perfect", well, (1) Go sell everything you have. (2) Give it to the poor. (3) You'll have treasure in heaven. (4) Then come follow me! (19:21). The young man didn't say another word, just turned and went away sorrowful (19:22) after hearing what Jesus has uttered to him because he had great possessions, and didn't want to part with them; give them up. Now, Jesus turns to His disciples, and applies this to any rich man, for He says "It's hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (19:23). And Jesus repeats it, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God"

The "Needle's Eye" was the small gateway where a camel had to have everything taken off of him; be unloaded, and then kneel down on all fours to go through the small opening of the door (the gateway). The kingdom of God demands trusting in God completely and totally without being loaded down with difficulties; get rid of the stumbling blocks. This ruler had stumbling blocks on his way to salvation. These difficulties were causing his riches to rule him.

Well, the disciples don't know what to think next, but "Who then can be saved?" for they surely thought the rich Jews would be (19:24). To this question, Jesus tells them "With man, No one, but with God all things are possible!" (19:26). Then Peter speaks up and says "We have left; forsaken all and followed you, what shall we get?" (19:27). Jesus then says, "Those who have followed me in the regeneration (the new birth) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory (His heavenly splendor), you will be seated on twelve thrones governing; judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (19:28). "Jesus reassures His disciple that every one that had forsaken homes and families or land in order to follow Him shall receive a hundredfold (hundred times as much) in return, and shall have Eternal Life!" (19:29). "But many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first" (19:30). Those who are first in their own eyes will be last in God's eyes, but those who are last in their own eyes will be rewarded as first.

I. CALL TO THE LABORERS MATTHEW 20:1-7

20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. Jesus is continuing His discussion of salvation from (19:25), and everlasting life from (19:29). He further explains what the Kingdom of Heaven is like in this parable. What Jesus wants us to do now is show the marvelous grace of God in salvation in giving Eternal Life. This is **The Parable of Laborers in the Vineyard**. In John 15:1-17 Jesus refers to Himself as the True Vine and to His Father as the Husbandman (the vineyard keeper; the vinedresser and the



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gardener). **The householder** here is God Himself, the Master of the Vineyard. These may also refer to an employer, a farmer; the master or owner of the house. **The Vineyard** represents the mission field. **Laborers** are the believers working, but each work differently.

The Kingdom of Heaven needs laborers in the vineyard! The householder goes out early in the morning (6a.m.); at daybreak to hire laborers to work in His vineyard. It's prayer time if you want to get instructions. A Jewish day began at 6am and ended 6pm.

20:2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. These 6am laborers are called first to come and labor in the vineyard. There is an agreement that came between the householder and the laborers to receive a penny a day. This is the daily rate for a day's work. This is the full wage; no overtime or extra if you've agreed to work for a full day. So, if they were willing laborers, believing his promise, then they were going into the field to work. And they being in agreement with the pay, were sent into His vineyard to work. So, we see:

- Their belief preceded their work.
- They were eager to work, and eager to receive the pay.
- He promised them; He sent them out; and they served.

The worker in God's vineyard can be described as a person who has decided to set himself apart for the service of God, and strives to know Him better in carrying out the Will of God.

20:3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,— The first time the householder went out was the first hour, which was early in the morning (6a.m.). Now, it's the third hour (9a.m.) and the householder sees others standing idle in the marketplace. Every city has its labor market hang-out. I see them all on the street curb of Home Depot. God's call is by "Grace" and not by "Works."

- The third hour (9am) has come, and there are still people standing idle.
- It is God who goes out to seek and call mankind.
- It is God who provides the work for man.
- Jesus is still calling. Will you come?

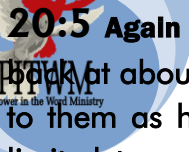
God's vineyard is a place where you are kept from being idle; to ensure you don't live a wasted and purposeless life. You are called upon to work for God, and after all you've done, you are rewarded for your labor of love.

20:4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. There was no fixed amount agreed to the pay of these late-comers, when a fourth of the day had already passed as they went into the vineyard. The householder just said, "*whatever is right he would give it.*" And they just went. In 19:27 The disciples had said responded and asked "*We have left; forsaken all and followed you, what shall we get?*", but these workers didn't ask nor negotiate. So, to the householder it means whatever is fair to Him. He calls the shots! He makes the rules! So, it's up to you whether you put in the work with a smile or a frown.

- They were eager to work, and eager to receive the pay no matter what it was.
- He promised to give, they believed, and they served.

God sees the heart before you even start a job! A late-comer, the person who does not respond to God until later in life, must simply trust God to be fair and just!

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20:5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. Again, the householder came out at about the sixth hour (12noon), and about the ninth hour (3p.m.) and repeated the same thing to them as he told others that were called. Up to this point there have only been four calls issued; limited to every three hours. God's Spirit will not always stride with us Gen.6:3. The calls of God become dimmer and less forceful with the rejection of each call.

God is generous, and His gifts of salvation and eternal life are available to anyone who believes in Him and trusts Him—whenever that belief comes.

20:6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?— The householder went out again finding others standing idle, even at the eleventh hour. The eleventh hour refers to the last minute. They are still waiting at 5pm for someone to come and pick them. They had not given up, and they had nothing else to do. The householder asks them a rebuking question to see where their mind was. *"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"* For there is no excuse for such behavior. There are six types of laborers:

1. There are the willing and eager laborers who's always out early looking for work.
2. There are the idle who have little or if any interest to work at all.
3. There are the self-seeking or pleasure laborers who move around questioning the employer about what kind of work to be done.
4. There are the slothful laborers who are just lazy, and not interested in a full day's work.
5. There are the complacent laborers; the slow movers who sleep late and move slow, and always late getting to the marketplace.
6. There are the weak failures are those who go to work at jobs that appeal to them, and discover the job is hard and difficult, so they walk away from their commitment, and return to the marketplace for something easier.

20:7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. This reminds us of the man at the pool and answer, but *"I have no one to put me in the water when the water is troubled."* These men say the same thing: *"Because no man hath hired us."* It is now the eleventh hour and the householder says *"Go ye into the vineyard and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive."* They were hired long after the others, and God offers a just wage. This is the Grace of God despite their deceptive excuse! And remember this would only be for one hour of work.

- There is always an opportunity to work in God's vineyard.
- Now, they have a direction and a purpose.
- Everyone receives God's compensation; reward.

The offer stands open to go, and the offer stands open in your choice to do good or bad!

II. COMPENSATION FOR THE LABORERS MATTHEW 20:8-10

20:8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. The *"evening has come"* means there is an evening or the time of death when we rest from labor; when the servant passes from this life into God's presence. He receives his reward of Eternal Life. God transports him into the Lord's presence, and the believer is transformed into the image of Christ. He's calling all laborers to give them their reward. This is the reward of wages referred to in this parable.

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The Lord of the Vineyard is God. The Steward is Jesus. The evening has come and all the laborers are called to get their pay. God pays everyone out of a heart of Grace! He doesn't pay (reward) us on the bases of when you come, but His reward is based on His grace and His justice. But He calls the last first.

20:9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. Those that came at the eleventh hour (the last minute) to be hired for work were called up first to receive their pay—a penny! They only worked an hour, and He pays the late-comers; the last-minute comers a full wage (Eternal Life)! When we speak of Eternal Life God shows no preference, no matter how old, or how long, or last minute of serving Him! It is as God knows and Wills. He gives no matter when we come, at the early call or the eleventh-hour call.

20:10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. Also, then came those who were hired first came and received likewise their pay—a penny. But they were thinking that they should have received more. However, that was the agreement.

III. COMPLAINT BY THE LABORERS MATTHEW 20:11-16

20:11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,— So, the first workers began to murmur against the goodman of the house. You can complain all you want, but your word is your word. They agreed to that amount. Note that the complaining by the earlier workers causes some to apply the parable to the relationship between God and the Jews and the Gentiles. The earlier workers represent the Jews, complain because God gives an equal pay (reward and position in His kingdom) to the Gentiles.

20:12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. The first worker began to say to the goodman of the house, that the last workers shouldn't have gotten the same equal pay that was given to them. The last workers only gave an hour of work, and should not be equal with the first who did most of the burden of the work all day in the heat of the day.

- Complaints of envy, or jealousy does not stand in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- You are never cheated working for God for He a just God.

20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?— It only takes one to speak out. This reminds me of when Jesus had told Peter to feed His sheep, then follow Him. And in John 21:21-22 But Peter seeing John the beloved and asked Jesus, "what shall this man do?" He was worrying about another man instead of what Jesus told him to do. Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You follow Me!" WOW! Jesus speaks to one of the first laborers, and still calls him friend, as if to say "child we're not going to make this hard." He takes him back to the agreement they had made. That's why you have to have a clear understanding—what you hear—what you sign—what you say yes to!

- Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
- If you agreed to it, there is no "but!"

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20:14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Another translation **PITWM:** *"Take what belongs to you and go, but I choose to give to this last man [hired] the same as I give to you."* Jesus was very frank, *"Take your agreed wages, and go; there is nothing more to be said."* This is the Will of the Lord! You are rewarded for your labor. 1 Timothy 5:18 says, ... *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"* and, *"The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?— God is not finished, and you can't fight against what the Lord desires to give that's already His. He even goes on to say *"Are you envious because I am generous?"* The first workers looked with envy and ill will at the prosperity of others. God is generous, and His gifts of Salvation and Eternal Life are available to anyone who believes in Him, and trusts Him—whether that belief comes at the beginning of a long life, or just moments before someone dies.

20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. This is the last statement was made in 19:30, and Jesus brings it back up again, so it must be pretty important. Remember, the disciples needed assurance of their salvation because if it was hard for a rich man to enter heaven, who shall be saved. Jesus gave them assurance and a promise the reward of ruling and reigning with Him, and living forever. But Jesus wanted them to know that before they could judge others, they couldn't tell what was in a man, who was to be highly rewarded, and who was not. They didn't know that the willing and eager laborer, who immediately responded would expose a grumbling, jealous spirit? The late workers were eager and just as happy to receive work and pay for only just an hour *"The last shall be first, and the first last"* will have you processing yourself when you...

- Fail to worship Christ day by day as consistently as the late workers.
- Fail to grow in the knowledge of Christ as eager as the late workers.
- Fail to study the Scriptures and pray as much as the late workers.
- Fail to use our gifts as faithfully as the late workers.
- Fail to witness as boldly as the late workers.
- Fail to give all that we are and have as willingly and sacrificially as the late workers.
- Fail to love as meekly as late workers.
- Fail to respond as kindly as the late workers.
- Fail to live as unselfishly as the late workers.
- Fail to relate as lovingly as late workers.
- Fail to endure as patiently as late workers.
- Fail to look for the return of Christ as hopefully as the late workers.

Many people who are last now will be first. And the people who are first now will be last.'

"Many be called, but few chosen." Many are counterfeit; not willing to give all they are and have. They are as the rich young ruler, just unwilling. The price of discipleship is too great.

SUMMARY:

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1 Jesus explains what the Kingdom of Heaven is like in a parable. It's like an owner of a vineyard who goes out early in the morning to hire laborers to work in his vineyard. **2** The agreement was for a penny a day, and the owner sent them into the vineyard. **3** The owner went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and told them **4** to go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever was right he will pay. **5** Again, the owner came back at about the sixth hour (12noon), and about the ninth hour (3p.m.) and repeated the same thing to them as he told others. **6** There are some still waiting at the eleventh hour (5pm) for the owner to come and pick. He asks them, *"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"* **7** And they replied *"Because no man hath hired us."* So, he hired them, and told them as he did the others (**20:1-7**).

8 The evening has come and all the laborers are called to get their pay, beginning from the last unto the first. **9** Every man received a penny. **10** Then came those who were hired first came and received likewise their pay—a penny, they thought they should have received more. Those hired at five o'clock put in only one hour of work. But the owner pays everyone a full day's wage (**20:8-10**).

11 So, the first workers began to murmur against the owner, **12** saying, the last workers only gave an hour of work, and should not be equal with the first who did most of the burden of the work all day in the heat of the day. **13** The owner answered one of them, and called him friend, *"I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?"* The owner takes him back to the agreement they had made. **14** The owner was very frank, *"Take your agreed wages, and go; I choose to give to this last man [hired] the same as I give to you."* **15** *"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"* **16** *"So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."* (**20:11-16**).

APPLICATION:

Don't be weighted down with the minor things. God is Fair! He's calling all laborers to give them their reward. Complaining should not be in our vocabulary, just adjust!