

The Labourers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

Introduction

- a. Parables are analogies and comparisons that are given in story form to illustrate divine truth.
 - Remember, a Parable is an Earthly Picture with an Eternal Perspective.
 - The word parable comes from the idea of “to set alongside.” Jesus used parables to set an earthly story to portray a Heavenly truth.

Note: It is important to understand that parables do not formulate doctrine, but rather they illustrate doctrine.

- b. The Parables of Jesus cover a range of subjects, the most common ones are as follows:

- 1) Salvation Parables

- There are a few parables that deal with Salvation and being born again.
Example: Matthew 21:33-45

- 2) Stewardship Parables

- There are several parables that deal with servants that are to be “Found Faithful”. Example: Luke 14:28-33

- 3) Prophetic Parables

- Jesus uses some parables to warn his disciples to be watchful and ready.
- Example: Luke 12:39-41

- 4) Praying Parables

- Some parables encourage Christ’s disciples to seek God persistently and passionately. Example: Luke 18:1-8

- 5) Christian virtue Parables

- Parables were used to convey powerful truths on Christ-like forgiveness.
- Example: Matthew 18:23-25

6) Kingdom Parables

- The main passages for the kingdom parables are found in Matthew 13 and Matthew 25.
- When Jesus taught on kingdom parables, Jesus for the most part was contrasting true professions from false professions.
- When dealing with “Kingdom Parables”, it is important to note that the parables do not say “The kingdom of Heaven *is*” but rather “the kingdom of Heaven is *like*”.

c. The parable we will be looking at tonight is the parable of “The Labourers in the Vineyard”

- The outline of Matthew 20:1-16 is as follows:

A. The COMPARISON of the Parable

B. The CONTEXT of the Parable

C. The CHARACTERS in the Parable

D. The COMPLAINT from the Labourers

E. The CONFRONTATION of the Goodman

A. The COMPARISON of the Parable

- o *Matthew 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.”

a. In verse 1 we have the phrase “the kingdom of heaven”, which is used 32 times in the Gospel of Matthew.

- So the question has to be asked, what is Jesus referring to when he says “The kingdom of heaven is LIKE”?
- To begin to understand this parable we must rightly define what the “Kingdom of Heaven” is.

b. *Note:* The terms “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are used interchangeably.

- In reference to the “rich man”: Jesus said in Matthew’s Gospel...
 - **Matthew 19:23** “...*Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”
 - However in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus states...
 - **Mark 10:23** “...*How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*”
- c. The Kingdom of Heaven is the place where God's ruling is recognized. If there is a kingdom, then there is King.
- d. The Kingdom of Heaven refers to everyone who professes to recognize God as the sovereign supreme King.
- However, the recognition of God’s divine authority is not enough.
 - So, in essence, the Kingdom of Heaven mainly applies to all genuine believers, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.
 - The Parable of the Four Soils depicts a group of people that were true believers and demonstrated Spiritual fruit as proof of their faith.
- e. Notice several Bible references outlining the historical development to the Kingdom of God.
- 1) A **PROPHESED** Kingdom that will NEVER be destroyed.
- Notice the prophecy of Daniel.
 - **Daniel 2:44** “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*”
 - **Note:** Jesus Christ will be the coming KING to the everlasting Kingdom of God.
 - **Daniel 7:13-14** “*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*”

2) A **PROCLAIMED** Kingdom that dwelt among men.

- Notice the cry of John the Baptist. John presents the King of the Kingdom, the Messiah.
- **Matthew 3:1-2** *“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, (2) And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- **Matthew 4:17** *“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- **Matthew 10:7** *“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- **Luke 17:20-22** *“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: (21) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (22) And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.*
- The Lord Jesus did not mean that the kingdom of God was actually inside the hearts of the Pharisees, because the Pharisees were hardened towards Christ and rejected Him.
- **Note:** To reject Christ is to reject the king of heaven. A person cannot have a true seeking desire for the Kingdom of Heaven without a true desire for the King Himself.
- What Jesus meant was that the Kingdom of God was in their midst... and Jesus was the King of Israel who by His miracles authenticated His Kingship.
- **Matthew 12:28** *“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”*
- **Matthew 11:2-5** *“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, (3) And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (4) Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear*

and see: (5) The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

❖ **Warren Wiersbe said** *“The statement “the kingdom of God is within you” has challenged Bible translators and interpreters for centuries, and many explanations have been given....The Greek preposition can mean “within,” “among,” or “in the midst of.” Jesus was saying, “Don’t look for the kingdom ‘out there’ unless it is first in your own heart....At the same time, He may also have been saying, “The fact that I am here in your midst is what is important, for I am the King. How can you enter the kingdom if you reject the King?” The Pharisees were preoccupied with the great events of the future but were ignoring the opportunities of the present (Luke 12:54-57).*

3) A **PRESIDING** Kingdom within every heart of Believers.

- When Christ ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell every heart/person that has made or is making Christ their King, Saviour and Lord. Christ presides over every Kingdom child.
- **Romans 14:17** *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*
- A person is not saved or justified by externals, but rather by the power of God that dwells in every heart of those who believe on Christ.
- **Matthew 6:33** *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*
- ❖ **William McDonald** *“The kingdom exists today, while the King is absent, in the hearts of all who acknowledge His kingship, and its moral and ethical principles, including the Sermon on the Mount, are applicable to us today... This interim phase of the kingdom is described in the parables of Matthew 13.”*
- **Ephesians 3:14-17** *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,”*

4) The **PREDICTED** Kingdom to come.

i. The coming Kingdom also refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

- Notice the comment Jesus makes regarding the faith of the Gentile centurion.
- **Matthew 8:10-12** *“When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (11) And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (12) But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*
- The faith of the centurion had put many of God’s chosen people to shame.
- Jesus firmly predicts that the Gentiles would come from all over the world to fellowship with the believing Jews (patriarchs) while the children of the kingdom would be thrown into hell.
- **Note:** The children of the kingdom are those who were Jews by birth, who professed to acknowledge God as King, but who were never truly saved.
- It is no different today with Gentile families, many children have the advantage to be raised up in Christian homes, but will one day perish in hell because they reject Christ.

ii. The everlasting Kingdom of God.

- **2 Peter 1:10-11** *“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: (11) For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*
- ❖ **William McDonald** *“The kingdom is not the same as the church. The kingdom began when Christ embarked on His public ministry; the church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The kingdom will continue on earth till the earth is destroyed; the church continues on earth till the Rapture (the catching away or removal of the church from earth when Christ descends from heaven and takes all believers home with Him— 1Th_4:13-18). The church will return with Christ at His Second Advent to reign with Him as His bride. At present the people who are in the kingdom in its true, inner reality are also in the church.”*

B. The CONTEXT of the Parable

a. In order to determine the context, the question is put forward, what leads Jesus to give this parable?"

- We find the answer in Matthew 19:27, where we see Peter make a vigorous testament, and with it, impose a striking question."
- ***Matthew 19:27*** "*Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*"
- Peter makes a comparison between the rich ruler, who was not willing to follow Christ because of his wealth, and the poor disciples that were willing to give everything to follow Christ.

b. Jesus responds to Peter in a series of profound truths leading up to our current parable.

1) A GIVEN PROMISE – Matthew 19:28-29

- ***Matthew 19:28-29*** "*And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*"
- The "regeneration" refers to the kingdom that Christ will establish when He returns.
- Jesus makes it very clear that all true believers who have sacrificed and suffered for the cause of Christ will be rewarded.
- ***Revelation 22:12*** "*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*"
- ***Note: Hundredfold means*** = God will abundantly bless them. (You can almost see Peter getting his calculator).
- The blessings do not have to be tangible, they can be spiritual blessings like, Love, Joy, and Peace – true fulfillments that are found in Christ.

2) A GREAT PARADOX – Matthew 19:30

- **Matthew 19:30** *“But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.”*

- **Question:** What is a paradox?

- A paradox is a statement that may seem contradictory but yet within that statement is a profound truth.
- When Peter asked what they would receive for giving all, Jesus observed that Peter had the wrong perception for service.
- Peter had a **“What’s in it for us”** attitude.
- The very reason Jesus proclaims this great paradox was to help His disciples have a proper understanding of being rewarded in service.

Note: This Great Paradox before us is the KEY that unlocks the door to the parable found in Matthew 20:1-16.

3) A GOODMAN’S PARABLE – Matthew 20:1-16

- If you notice in many marked Bibles you will see that the heading for this Parable is called “The Labourers in the Vineyard” which is not entirely wrong, but the parable is also a reflection on the Goodman of the Vineyard.
- **Note:** The heart of the parable is an illustration that God rewards men based upon “His grace” and not “our goodness”; based upon “His love” and not “our labour alone”. (The truth is that a person could labour with the wrong intentions)
- THE PARABLE BEFORE US EMPHASISES THE RIGHT ATTITUDE IN SERVING THE LORD.
- ❖ *It has been said that the parable can also be preparation for believing Jewish disciples to understand the love of God bestowed to the Gentiles.*

- The Parable is not only focused on the “character of the labourers”, but it zoomed in on the “compassion of the Goodman”.
- This bring us to the next point, “The Characters in the Parable”

C. The CHARACTERS in the Parable

- **Matthew 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.”
- a. A man (Goodman) = Jesus Christ
- The Goodman was the householder and owner of the Vineyard.
 - The Goodman is the one who recruits. Early in the morning the Goodman would go to the market place, which was the gathering place for all the day labourers. If a man was looking for work, he went to the market place first thing in the morning with his tools, and waited until someone hired him.
 - The Goodman is the one that recruits and sends the labourers to work in His Vineyard.
 - **Matthew 9:37-38** “Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; (38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. ”
 - The “Vineyard” would typify the “mission field” in which His disciples would labour by reaching people with the gospel and fulfilling the great commission.
- b. Hired labourers = Professing Believers/Disciples.
- Note:** It is important to note that there were actually two kinds of labourers that were hired that day:
- Those who wanted an agreement to work for a fixed price.
 - And those who had no agreement, but were willing to accept whatever the owner thought was right. The first labourers that were hired insisted on a contract.
- 1) In this parable we find “Labourers” that have agreed to work for a penny a day. (A Roman Coin)

- **Matthew 20:2** “And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.”
 - **Note:** “A day” in this parable would indicate the lifespan of the labourers.
 - **John 9:4** “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
 - The Jews divided their days into twelve equal parts, or hours, beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset.
 - A full day’s work would be about 6:00am to 6:00pm.
 - There were labourers that were hired for the whole day and worked for about 12 hours.
- 2) There were labourers that were hired to work on the third hour, which would be about 9:00am. (Worked for 9 hours)
- **Matthew 20:3** “And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,”
 - **Note:** There was no agreement made for their wages.
 - **Matthew 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.”
- 3) There were labourers that were hired to work on the sixth and ninth hour, which would be about 12:00pm and 3:00pm. (Which was about 6 hour and 3 hours)
- **Matthew 20:5** “Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.”
 - **Note:** “...and did likewise” would indicate to us that there was no agreement made for their wages.
- 4) There were labourers that were hired to work on the eleventh hour, which would be about 5:00pm (Which worked for an 1 hour)
- This would make these labourers work for just **about an hour.**
 - **Matthew 20:6-7** “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? (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.”

c. The Steward.

- The steward was given orders from the Goodman to pay the labourers their wages.
- A steward is one who manages the business or the affairs of another. He is the one who managed the affairs in the absence of the householder. He was usually the most trusted and faithful of all the servants, raised to that position as a reward for his loyalty.
- However, in this parable the focus is not on the Steward.

Note: In verse 8 we see the paradox in action in the parable. The focus is on labourers.

1) The last labourers were the first ones to be paid.

- *Matthew 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.**”

2) All the labourers were paid the same amount, one penny each.

- *Matthew 20:9* “And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.”
- **This leads us to the next main point of the parable.**

D. The **COMPLAINT** from the Labourers

- *Matthew 20:10-12* “But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. (11) And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, (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.”

- Imagine the look on their face when they saw the labourers who worked for an hour each receiving a penny! This meant that their own wages should have been twelve pennies each!

a. What is very wrong with this picture?

1) They had the wrong **PERCEPTION**.

- **Matthew 20:10** “*But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny?*”

- According to their understanding they should have been paid more for working longer hours than the other labourers.
- The reason they had the wrong thinking was because they were comparing themselves with others.
- By comparing themselves with others they concluded that they were worth MORE.

❖ **In Matthew 19, you will notice the** Disciples were comparing themselves with the rich man who was not willing to give up all to follow Jesus Christ.

- What do you think the attitude of the disciples would be like if they found out that the rich man eventually repented and trusted Christ as his own Saviour and received the same reward as them?

2) They were **UNGRATEFUL**

- **Matthew 20:11** “*And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,”*

- Instead of being grateful for the work, they complained and murmured against the Goodman.
- **Comparing leads to complaining, and complaining is the evidence of a discontented heart.**

3) They were **PRIDEFUL**

- **Matthew 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.”*

- We have worked longer and harder compared to these labourers who

- have only worked an hour as the sun sets.
- We have worked in the heat of the day, they have worked in the cool of the day.
 - They had a “WE DESERVE MORE” attitude.

b. Notice a list of areas for which we won't be rewarded:

1) Abilities/Talents/Goods

- In the Parable of the Talents we see God deliver different servants with different amounts of talents (5, 2, and 1 talent)]
- **Matthew 25:14-15** *“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. (15) And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”*
- God gives the measure of faith and grace to each one in order for them to exercise their GOD-GIVEN abilities.
- **Romans 12:3-6** *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (5) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;”*

➤ **What does God reward? FAITHFULNESS**

- God rewards those that are faithful with what He has GIVEN them.

2) Progression/fruit

- **1 Corinthians 3:5-8** *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (6) I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. (7) So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. (8) Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

➤ **What does God reward? FAITHFULNESS**

- God rewards those that are faithful with what He has CALLED them to do.

- **John 4:36-37** “*And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. (37) And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.*”

- If God has allowed you to reap the blessings of the sower it does not mean you are worth more.

- **1 Corinthians 15:9-10** “*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (10) But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*”

3) Position/Office

- God is not going to reward believers based upon rank.
- It does not matter if you are a preacher or a helper. It does not matter if you are a teacher or a disciple.

- **Matthew 11:11** “*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*”

- John the Baptist was the greatest because he paved the way for Christ and saw with his own eyes the fulfillment of ALL the other prophets.
- Christ was speaking of the privilege John the Baptist had, not more or less of his character.
- **By the way**, John the Baptist had a proper perception of himself.

- **Matthew 11:11** “*...notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*”

- A person who is least in the kingdom of heaven does not necessarily mean they are better than John the Baptist in character, but they have even a greater privilege than John the Baptist.
- Those that are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and have Christ living in them are the most privileged saints of all.

- **Notice what the Apostle Paul said:**

- **2 Timothy 4:7-8** *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, **but unto all them also that love his appearing.**”*

➤ **What does God reward? A PROPER PERCEPTION.**

- God rewards those that SERVE GOD with a PURE Motive.

- **1 Corinthians 3:13** *“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of **what sort it is.**”*

- **1 Corinthians 4:5** *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”*

➤ **Ask yourself the question...Why are you serving God?**

- Are you serving God for the praise of men?
- Are you serving God to compete and be the best?
- Are you serving God to show-off your gifts?
- Are you serving God to be accepted by your peers?
- Are you serving God to earn salvation?
- Are you serving God out of fear?
- Are you serving God for more rewards?

- We MUST serve God for God, and we MUST serve God out of love, nothing more, and nothing less.

E. The CONFRONTATION of the Goodman

a. His Comment

- **Matthew 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?”*
- Notice how he calls him “friend”. The Lord was teaching His disciples and not His enemies.
- Remember, Jesus was teaching Peter to have a proper perspective in

service of the Lord.

❖ **William McDonald** said *“It is better to leave our rewards up to the Lord than to strike a bargain with Him.”*

- **Matthew 20:14** *“Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.”*
- **Note:** Our judgments upon the Lord will not sway Him from doing what is right. The Lord will ALWAYS do that which right.
- **Genesis 18:25** *“...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*
- **Psalms 119:62** *“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”*

b. His Compassion

- **Matthew 20:15** *“Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”*
- In other words, “What is to you if I have decided to bless others?”
- **Note:** The “evil eye” was a jealous, envious eye. The Goodman asks the man if he is jealous because he showed grace to other people.
- Jesus was teaching Peter to be glad when others are blest.
- We must understand that there are some people that are saved at an older age and only have a few years of service. The rich man that walked away sad still had the opportunity to come to Christ. Can you imagine if the rich man eventually repented, and we all see him in heaven where he is rewarded the same amount as the disciples!
- Jesus loved the rich man just as much He loved Peter.
- **Mark 10:21** *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”*

- One the greatest problems Peter had was constantly comparing himself to others, and Peter would find comfort in what he was willing to do and or what he did do for Christ.
- **Matthew 26:33** *“Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”*
- **John 21:19-22** *“This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. (20) Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? (21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? (22) Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Conclusion

- When you trace the broader context, you will notice Jesus trying to deal with His disciples regarding “What Mattered Most”.
 - a. **In Matthew 16** – Jesus reveals for the very first time what kind of suffering He will be facing.
 - **Matthew 16:21-21** *“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (22) Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. (23) But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”*
 - b. **In Matthew 17** – Jesus again predicts his suffering.
 - **Matthew 17:22-23** *“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:(23) And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.*
 - c. **In Matthew 18** – We see the disciples ask a question that begins to expose their hearts.

- **Matthew 18:1-4** “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Vs 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, vs 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Vs 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”
- d. **In Matthew 20** – Proceeding the Parable, Jesus predicted His death for the third time, and then an interesting request came from the mother of Zebedee's children.
- **Matthew 20:17-21** “And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, (18) Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, (19) And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. (20) Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. (21) And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.
- e. **In Matthew 20:29-34** – We see a blind man asking for just one request that had nothing to do with succession, reward, or who will be the greatest.
- **Matthew 20:29-34** “And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. (30) And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. (31) And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. (32) And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, **What will ye that I shall do unto you?** (33) They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. (34) So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.”
- f. **Some things to consider in Closing:**
- 1) Our Motives must be in submission to God at all times.
 - Even after this message you can say, “I want to be last so I can be first”

- That is a wrong motive.
 - **Matthew 20:16** *“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”*
 - In other words, it does not matter how long each of the workers worked, they all received a full day's wage.
 - In essence, God rewards and blesses man according to His will and pleasure, and not necessarily according to what men think they deserve.
 - How long did Stephen serve the Lord before he was stoned... he didn't serve long as a deacon.
 - How long did James the brother of John serve the Lord before Herod killed him with the sword...? He didn't start any churches.
 - How long did the thief on the cross serve the Lord before he died?
- ❖ **A man of God said** *“The system of law is easy to figure out: you get what you deserve. The system of grace is foreign to us: God deals with us according to who He is, not according to who we are.”*
- 2) The parable is not in any way trying to promote laziness.
- From the moment God calls a person, they should have a strong desire to serve Him out of love.
 - We are not to mock God by taking His love or grace for granted.
 - **Romans 12:9-11** *“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (10) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (11) Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

Memory Verse:

- **Matthew 20:16** *“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”*