



YEAR A – September 20, 2020

Today's Gospel (*Matthew 20:1-16A*) puzzles some people. My Father who ran his own business until he retired, used to say, "It's a heck of a way to run a business." He knew the parable is not about running a business. He actually wanted us to learn what he already knew. The parable is about getting from God all the things that we *need according to the mind of God*, without comparing what we get with what everybody else gets. He used to say, "Happiness is not having what you want, it's wanting what you have."

Whenever we focus on what other people have and compare that to what we have, we usually wind up complaining about something, just like some of the folks in the Gospel today.

Dr. Maya Angelou, an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist, recorded one of her childhood recollections in her book entitled, "*Wouldn't Take Nothin' for the Journey Now.*" It resonates with God's message in the Scriptures. It's a story about her grandmother Annie who ran a store in rural Arkansas. Any time a known whiner would show up, her grandmother would call little Maya to come inside and listen. As the complainer went on and on and on, Grandmother Annie would look over to little Maya to make sure she was listening.

Angelou, who was an accomplished writer, teacher, producer and director, recalls her grandmother's words to her after the customers left. "Sister", she would say, "...there are people who went to sleep last night, poor and rich, white and black, but they will never wake again. And those dead folks would give anything at all for just five minutes of this hot weather or ten minutes of plowing. Watch yourself about complaining". Then she would say, "What you're supposed to do when you don't like something is change it, don't complain about it. And if you can't change it, change the way you think about it."

St. Teresa, the Little Flower, had a beautiful way of explaining what, at first glance, seems to be unfair. Why do some people seem to get more blessings and some folks seem to get less? She said, "Imagine a whole bunch of water glasses of different sizes. Each one is filled to the brim so that it isn't possible to get another drop of water into any of them. Each one is filled to *maximum capacity*. That's the way God wants to deal with us because he knows what we need." When we are filled with the love and joy of Jesus there's no room in our hearts for jealousy or envy. There's no room for complaining or whining, or anything of that sort. We are filled to maximum capacity, no matter how big or small our "glass" might be.

There is a promise from Jesus on how to fill your "glass" with the right stuff and be happy in the process (*Matthew 6:33*). Do you believe Him? Do you trust Him? Check it out in your Bible.

Before you fall asleep tonight, consider the "glass" you have from God. Is it filled with the joy and love of Jesus? Or is it filled with something else. The past doesn't matter now. As C.S. Lewis reminds us, "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." Jesus calls that "*metanoia*".

What do you need to change?