

## The Mission is the Goal!

This parable followed on Jesus' encounter with the rich young man who wanted to gain eternal life, but couldn't bring himself to give away his wealth in order to do so. One wonders if that sad man ever figured out that the only way to the kingdom of heaven was to care about others more than he did about himself (Matthew 19:16-30).

Right after the incident with that man, Jesus told this story about how things are in the kingdom of heaven and how God can be compared to a wealthy landowner. **The setup leads us to two questions: "What kind of a landowner is God, and who would be happy to work in his vineyard?"**

**The landowner Jesus depicts is persistent.** He himself goes out at dawn to find people who need the work he has to offer. He returns to the labor market four more times. It seems, as if, the primary focus of his day is on finding workers: he goes looking before and after breakfast, before and after lunch, and finally just before supper time. **Finding his workers seemed to be more important than eating!** His ways are not my ways nor his thoughts my thoughts. I'm always interested in eating! **By early afternoon, any observer would have been catching on to the fact that this master had a great deal more interest in employing the people than in the amount of work they could accomplish.** Again, not our thoughts or ways.

What kind of landowner is God? The owner who kept going out must have understood that, with each successive trip, he was apt to find less and less desirable workers. His dawn-hires were probably the men who appeared to be the strongest, the ones who got up extra early and could well have been hired by others. As the day wore on, the workers still waiting were the consistently unchosen. **Everything points to the fact that for this master, the workers mattered more than the work.**

Next time you want to be jealous because you have borne the heat of the day...think I was chosen first for a reason.

**That leads to the second question. Who wants to be in this master's employ?** The early birds had no complaints at the moment of their hire. The situation was normal. They went to the labor market that day and got a job right away "for the usual daily wage." Unlike the late-hires, they didn't have to endure hours of worry speculating where they should go next, wondering whether or not they

would get a job — they were in and set? Each time the owner returned to the market, the people he encountered were a little more anxious, and therefore, a little more grateful when he hired them. Those who had waited the longest were surely the most thrilled at finally being chosen.

The parable doesn't canonize any of the workers, although it surely suggests that some ended up far more grateful to the owner and far more willing to work for him again.

What's the parable really about? Just what Isaiah said, "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are God's ways above ours." The reoccurring theme~

Peter get behind me Satan...you are an obstacle...a stumbling rock, for you think as man thinks and not as God thinks. And Peter last week, how many times must I forgive? 7 time? Jesus says, not 7 times but 77 times. And Yes this parable today is also addressed to Peter. Today's Gospel follows right after Peter says this, "We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?"

Peter wants to get it! He thinks he gets it, but Jesus raises the bar again and again.

You see the parable is not a who's first, who's first, who's got the most! What is there in it for me, is not the question?

The parable is really about priority of the Mission! The Mission of God is to call all to the vineyard, the Mission of the workers is bring in the harvest—Together!

And whether you were picked in the first hour or the eleventh hour, frankly there is plenty enough of work to go around. A priest friend of mine says, if a house is on fire, and the first fire company arrives to put out the flames, and a few minutes later the second company arrives, and a half hour the third company arrives, no one complains about who has been here the longest, they are all simply grateful that each is here with the common goal to put out the fire. And all rejoice at the end to say "job well done."

A common Mission has a way of concentrating the mind and heart on what matters. God knows what matters, and certainly in the heat of the battle all trivial things fall away. It is Satan who brings up the trivial and therefore discontent—NOT God!

After all the goal, both God's and his Church, is to include all in the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the end how can you have more or less of heaven. The usual daily wage, will be a great plenty at the end of the Mission. I'll be glad and grateful, I got chosen!!! Amen!