WHAT ARE YOU WORKING FOR?

Our passion and purpose for fulfilling the "Great Commission" must outweigh any concern over rewards we will receive.

KEY POINTS

- At the end of Matthew 19, Peter is concerned about rewards for services rendered to God. He asks Jesus, "…'See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have'" (19:27)?
- This is the mindset of a "hireling" (John 10:12), "What's in it for me", not understanding the mission of Christ. Jesus addresses the issue in Matthew 20.
- The 'gate' of a first-century city was a hub of activity. Soldiers gathered there, the most vulnerable part of the city walls. Judges and city counsellors performed their duties. Imported goods were traded. Local produce, livestock, bread, and clothing were sold. Potential employers came to find labourers seeking a day's work.
- The landowner in the parable came early in the morning. He hired grape-gatherers for his vineyard, promising each a normal day's wage, one denarius.
- He continued to hire workers until the 11th (or final) hour of the work day. As he began to pay them, he gave a denarius to each of the last hires. Those hired at the 9th hour were paid the same.
- The first ones hired must have been excited! A full day's wage for one and three hours' work?
- Those hired in the sixth hour had worked a full half day, so for sure they'd earn more! But – what?! – They also received a denarius. Nothing more.
- Then came the turn of the first workers. No! How on earth was it fair that they had worked a full day, through the strongest heat of the sun, and yet receive the same denarius as those who started at the 11th hour?
- There are a number of points for us to consider in the "Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard":

1. **God wants a "harvest" of souls to be gathered into His storehouse**. He commissioned us to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person" (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).
2. **He wants as many people as possible involved in reaping His harvest**. "Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest'" (Luke 10:2).
3. **There is only one reward for faithful service to God (whether it has been of long or short duration)** – the commendation of Jesus Christ Himself. "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord'" (Matthew 25:21). Ultimately, we receive eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23, 5:21). Whether we have been saved for 20 years or 20 minutes, the reward we receive is identical.
4. **The workers in the parable all had the same need** – money to purchase food, clothing and shelter for themselves and their families – **whether they were hired early or late.** Similarly, we all need God, His salvation, commendation and eternal life. We should rejoice that He gives His grace, mercy and generosity to all who believe!

- We ourselves were introduced to Jesus and His salvation and sanctification through the sacrificial labour of others. Now we work with Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost.
- We are not concerned about who gets "paid" what. We only care that souls are saved, granted eternal life, and ready for the coming of the Lord.
- This is what we are working for!

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. What is the difference between the mindset of "hirelings" (John 10:12) and the mindset of "labourers with God" (1 Corinthians 3:19; 2 Cor. 6:1)?
2. How are believers commissioned by God different (or not), from labourers at the gate waiting to be employed? Discuss.
3. In this parable, do you tend to identify more with the feelings of the early labourers, or those of their employer? Explain.
4. Read and discuss the four 'points to consider' and the scriptures included.
5. Pray together for a heart of love that cares more about reaping the harvest than about who gets the "best" reward.

KEY SCRIPTURES:
Matthew 20:1-16, John 10:7-15

Prayer Time

Lord, we will work together with each other and with You, until You come, or take us home. Our reward is in Your hand and we are grateful!

L.G. ice-Breaker: What was your first paying job (if N/A, first chore at home)? What did you have to do, and why did you leave it (or not)?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2018

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS