



Orthodoxy



March 2021



The parables of the Lord Jesus

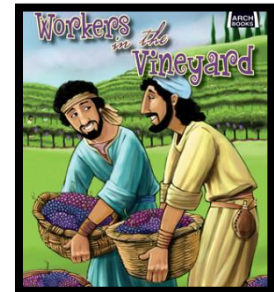
The Parable of the Vineyard Workers



As we all think about the kingdom of Heaven, many questions come to our minds such as: Can we really be good enough so that we can live with the Lord eternally? Or who can go to heaven if all the people are sinners and a lot of them don't even know God?

One day the Lord had a lot of people around Him and because He knows that they might have a lot of questions about who can go to heaven, He wanted to teach them a very important lesson about God's grace.

In the parable of the Vineyard workers, God wants us to understand that He is so gracious and that He is calling us in every stage of our lives to accept Him and follow Him. He is so merciful that He would accept us when we come back to Him even at the last stage of our lives.



We read the parable of the Vineyard workers in the Gospel of St. Matthew (chapter 20: verse 1-16)

The Lord said that God's Kingdom is like a man who owned a vineyard. A vineyard is a place where grapes are grown. There is always plenty of work to do in a vineyard and the man who owned this vineyard needed to hire some workers.



One day early in the morning around 6 a.m., he found a group of people who agreed to work for a denarius (in Bible times this was payment for one day's work). It is worth approximately \$20 now!! The group of workers went to the vineyard and began working.



Around 9 a.m. the owner went and saw other people standing in the marketplace and told them that if they went to work in his vineyard, he would pay them fairly. He didn't tell them exactly what he would pay like he did the first group. He just said he would pay them whatever is right. This group agreed to work for the owner and started working in his vineyard at 9 a.m.



The landowner went back to the marketplace at noon time and found another group of people he asked to work for him. They said yes and went off to work in his vineyard.





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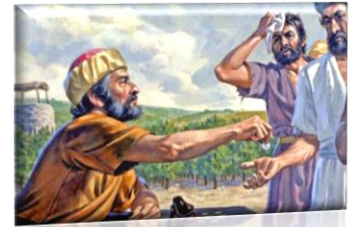
At 3 o'clock the landowner went back to the marketplace and hired another group of people to work in his vineyard and off they went to work for the landowner.

A typical work day went from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. What the landowner did next was amazing because there was only one hour left to the work day.



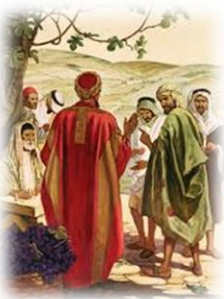
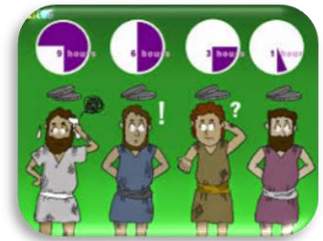
He went back to the marketplace at 5 o'clock and saw a group of people just standing around. He asked them "Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?" They answered the man and said, "Because no one has hired us." The landowner told this group of workers that they could go to work in his vineyard. Even though there was only one hour left to the workday they agreed to work.

At the end of the day the landowner called all of his workers together. He told one of his men in charge to pay the workers. He gave him instructions to pay the workers that began working at 5 o'clock first and pay the ones who began working at 6 o'clock in the morning last.



As all the workers are gathered together the man in charge of paying the workers called the group that began working at 5 o'clock first. With every one watching, he hands each of them a denarius.

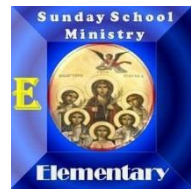
Next, the group that began at 3 o'clock comes and they each received a denarius. The same happens for the group that started at noon and at 9 o'clock. Finally the workers are standing there waiting to receive their payment. Seeing that those who worked less than they did receive a denarius they figured that they would receive more money because they worked all day.



When they put out their hand and received a denarius they began to complain. They didn't feel like the landowner was being fair. How come he gave the workers who labored the whole 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm as the workers who worked only one hour from 5 pm to 6 pm?!!



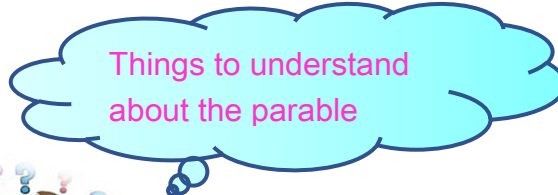
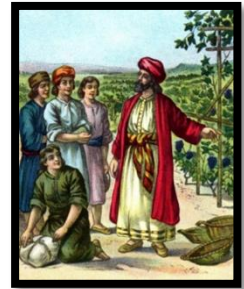
The landowner responded by saying that he had been fair. He gave these workers exactly what they had agreed upon before they started. Because he was the landowner, he had the right to give to each group of workers what he wanted to give.



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Then he told the workers who was complaining "Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' **So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.**" (Matthew 20:14-16)



The Landowner

Is God



The denarius

The kingdom of heaven



The workers

Everyone who accepted Christ in any stage of life

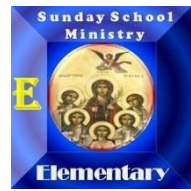


We might think that the landowner is unfair because those workers who worked the whole day got the same pay as who worked only for the last hour!! But this parable has an amazing meaning.



Let's understand what the Lord Jesus wanted to tell us.

This parable explains to us how God is so merciful that He accepts everyone who comes to Him at any stage of their life.



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Some people who knew God from the beginning of their lives who were baptized at a young age, come to church, and working to strengthen their relationship with God will receive a denarius which is the ultimate reward (kingdom of heaven) ;if we follow the Lord 's commandments and holdfast to our beliefs.



But also the people who did not know God from the beginning, God is still searching for them and calling them. When they hear His voice and accept His invitation, He will accept them, and they will go to heaven too.



Even if it was at the very last moment like those workers who were waiting at the market until the last minute, hoping to find a chance to work, it wasn't their fault that they didn't work from the beginning of the day. (Like they know God from a very young age) they just didn't have the chance. That is why God will accept them as well.

This parable expresses God's mercy and generosity to everyone, and reminds us that God's view of "fairness" is not the same as our human understanding, and that's actually quite a positive thing for us. God forgives our sins when we repent and we don't get what we deserve—and that saves our souls! Because if we got everything we deserved, we would receive punishment and death for our sins! Instead, we get mercy and live in the Lord Jesus. We should give thanks to God that He is good, merciful and just.



So what is the difference between the workers who worked from the beginning and the workers who worked at the very last minute?



Those who worked from the beginning had a privilege to know God from the beginning of life to follow Him, enjoy His blessings, and be safe knowing that they have a Heavenly Father. But those who didn't work (or didn't know God from the beginning) were waiting to have a chance to find the true God, the generous landowner who will accept them.