



Sermon, Sunday November 21, 2021

“Parable of the Vineyard Workers and Thanksgiving to the Lord”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:1-16 ¹ For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Introduction: Background to the parable of the Vineyard Workers

Today's text shows a very common occurrence. At the time of Jesus, many people owed money to the Roman Empire to pay taxes. They were forced to sell their land because of debt. As a result, a large number of people became unemployed. They have to work all day to make a living for their family. The parable of the Vineyard Workers in today's text reflects these times.

Also, today's text shows us the Lord's love and grace. Today is the beginning of Thanksgiving Week. We often forget to be grateful. Conversely, we are concerned with what we lack, complaining about our lives, or trying to compensate for our shortcomings. Yet we already enjoy a lot. We have the wonderful grace of the Lord. Through today's text, please think about the grace of the Lord we have received and let's confess our gratitude to the Lord.

Body: The Parable of the Vineyard Workers

First, let's look at Matthew 20:1. “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.” In this verse, there is a landowner who seeks laborers for a day's work. Who is the landowner of the vineyard in this verse?

1. The landowner of the vineyard diligently seeks workers.

The vineyard landowner described in today's text is doing his best to find workers and let them work in the vineyard. So the landowner of the vineyard goes out to the marketplace early in the morning to get workers. He also goes to the marketplace at 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. to get workers.



The landowner did not send a servant to the marketplace to hire workers. Instead, the landowner himself comes to the marketplace in search of workers.

Also, the landowner of the vineyard goes to the marketplace not once, but several times to find laborers. What we need to know here is that the vineyard landowner was not looking for workers for his own benefit. The landowner described in today's text sees people as co-workers and essential people in the work of the vineyard. **So the Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:12. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service."**

We must be faithful to the Lord who calls us to be co-workers and useful persons. We should be very grateful that the Lord, who is like the landowner of the vineyard, is always with us. So, what is another aspect of the landowner of the vineyard described in today's text?

2. The landowner of the vineyard pays money for labor of workers.

Second, the landowner of the vineyard not only lets workers work and then he rewards them. The landowner of the vineyard promises to pay the workers a day's wages. **"After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard."**(Matthew 20:2) The landowner of the vineyard in today's text compensates the workers for their work. The landowner pays the workers whether they come early to work or late to work in his vineyard. Why would a vineyard landowner do this? Because he knows that the money must be paid for workers so that they can spend a comfortable night with their families.

What should we not forget about this vineyard landowner? The fact is that the Lord is our rewarder. However, the reward the Lord gives us may not be what we think. But what is clear is that the reward the Lord has prepared for us is richer and greater than we think. We are so grateful that the Lord, such as the landowner of the vineyard, is always with us. So, what is another aspect of the landowner of the vineyard described in today's text?

3. The landowner of the vineyard is good and generous to all.

The landowner of the vineyard in today's text is good and generous to all. According to today's text, those who come to work in the vineyard in the morning and those who come to work in the vineyard late in the afternoon receive the same wages. That's why people who have worked in hot weather for long hours from early in the morning complain.

Look at Matthew 20:12. "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But, in fact, there is no problem for the landowner of the vineyard.

Let's look at today's text, Matthew 20:14. "Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you." In this verse, the landowner of the vineyard says, **"Take what belongs to you and go."** What does 'take what belongs to you?' mean? It contains the following message: **"Why don't you think that what you received is grace? If I hadn't hired you, would you have wasted your day playing in the marketplace. And because of I hired you, you can work in my vineyard and you got paid. You agreed with me to receive one denarius as your wages one day. The one denarius you received is a worthy denarius. It was also received with grace."** This verse also has other important meanings. It also contains the meaning, **"I want to show my favor to those who have come late. Can't I do what I want with my money"**.

We must not forget that we are people of the same faith, the same Word, the same grace, and the same salvation under the grace of Christ. The Lord tells us, **"It is my will to give the same to those who come last."** In today's text, the landowner of the vineyard says, **"Take what belongs to you and go."** This means that we should see how great the grace we have received. And don't compare ourselves to our neighbors. Therefore, we must realize and not forget that the grace we receive and possess is great and precious.



Conclusion: True Gratitude!

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Today's text **Matthew 20:16** says: **“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”** This verse does not simply mean that the last should be first. Nor is it simply to say that the first will be last. What this verse means is to do well with the task entrusted to us now with gratitude. In other words, we should not be vigilant because we came first and should not be interested in other things, but continue to focus on our own work and do well in the work the Lord has entrusted to us. As we spend this Thanksgiving holiday, we hope that we will all become more grateful for the abundant grace of the Lord already given to us, rather than focus on lack and need.

