

Labor On in the Grace of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 August 2024

Preacher: Eric Hair

[0 : 00] Matthew chapter 20 beginning in verse 1.

! For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And to them he said, you go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.

So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, why do you stand here idle all day?

They said to him, because no one has hired us. He said to them, you go into the vineyard too. And when the evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last up to the first.

[1 : 21] And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. When those hired first, they thought they would receive more, but they each of them also received a denarius.

And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, 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.

But he replied to them, to one of them, friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with, what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last. You may be seated.

So this summer, it was my first year of going to kids camp.

[2 : 22] Altogether, never went as a child, and I never went to Falls Creek as a youth. So this year, the summer camp was my first year going to kids camp. There were many new different aspects of camp with kids camp.

Something that had been on my mind leading up to camp, of course, this is what I'm going to think about. How in the world were they going to feed all these kids at one time in a timely manner?

I like my food, so that was on my mind, even before we got there. So here's the scene. One large dining hall. It was huge. Huge. Hundreds and hundreds of kids and many adults.

How is this going to happen once I saw that dining hall? Once again, that question popped in my mind. Well, apparently, through the years, they got it figured out, which I should have known, that they would have known how to feed all these kids at one time in a timely manner.

They had it figured out because the line went by fast, and I didn't have to wait long. As I waited in line like everyone else with much grace and patience, except when some kids tried to cut in line, grace was out the window.

[3 : 30] I'm noticing they are giving all the kids all the same amount of food. I believe the first night was chicken fingers or something like that, and they were each getting five.

I noticed that. One of the first things I noticed, how many chicken fingers these kids were getting, and I noticed the adults were getting the same thing. You know, I was hoping they would notice me and think, hey, this guy likes his food.

He's an adult. He's here all week with these kids. He needs more. Nope. I got what the kids got. Same amount.

And then my mind turned to, as I saw what I was receiving in my plate, my mind turned to, well, as far as our cabin is from this cafeteria, I'm going to be losing some weight this week. I thought surely they would have pity on me for the week and give me an extra helping. Didn't happen. As we look at this parable, it's a similar thought process played out in our Christian lives. [4 : 41] They did this. They got that. What about me? And I've been around longer. I deserve more. And so on and so on. This is a parable about the grace of God.

God's grace is something spectacular and amazing. We do not deserve what Jesus accomplished on the cross and in the resurrection, but that's why it's called grace. It's free to us. It's a gift. No matter how you view it, we don't deserve it. In the wickedness of our sin, we deserve God's wrath.

In light of the grace God bestowed on his chosen, what should our response be? Our response should be gratitude. Gratitude, which leads to obedience.

Obedience in kingdom work. So we came to, we come to our main idea tonight, and our main idea tonight is, your kingdom work is a reflection of your gratitude for God's grace.

[5 : 42] Your kingdom work, talking about yours as an individual, your kingdom work is a reflection of your gratitude for God's grace. And in this parable, we're going to look at three aspects of the kingdom of heaven, which lead us to gratitude.

So aspect number one is you are chosen. You are chosen. Verse one, for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

The master referenced to his God in this parable. Jesus speaks about the master being intentional for who he's looking for, who he chooses them.

He doesn't choose them just to be merely friends for the day, but his desire is that they would choose to go work for him, and in return would receive a wage. A little insight into this time period. As the New Testament time period began to come around, the old ways of keeping family land within the family was beginning to fade away. People were selling land so that they could be more mobile, so they could, if they needed, they could quickly move to the city where economic opportunity was more prevalent.

[7 : 06] And so the idea of keeping family land within the family was beginning to wane, to fade into the past. During this time, it was common for man to gain more land, and with a greater need for outside help, looking for hired workers.

Along with selling family land, those who sold their family land may not have gained the opportunities they were searching for in the cities. Now they relied on day-to-day jobs that might arise on the very land that they used to own.

And so that's why this parable, it's starting out in such a manner, is that a master is going out looking for people to hire. He's going out to choose them.

During this time of the year, it was the grape harvest. They needed to be harvested before the fall rains came, before the temperature cooled down and started messing with the grapes.

This mention of laborers is a reference to Christ's followers. Matthew 19, 27, for those who have forsaken their own desires and follow Jesus. Those of us who have proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Savior and who follow in his footsteps.

[8 : 23] And as much as we can seek after sanctification, that's who this is talking about, the laborers. As the master is looking for harvest laborers, in Matthew 9, 35 through 38, and Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Again, going back to the first verse, as the master is going out looking for those to help with the harvest, this is Jesus talking about to his disciples, about needing harvesters for the kingdom of God.

Going out, proclaiming the gospel, going out and sharing the truth with people. And that's what this is in reference to, the first verse of chapter 20.

Verse 2 says, After agreeing with the laborers for denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. So the workday of the harvest was 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. It was quite a workday.

[9 : 49] I'm not sure I could handle that. Twelve hours. That's a long time. It was hard work and scorching heat, but also a better than fair wage to do the work.

The denarius, it was considered a day's wage. It was also a day's wage for a Roman soldier, so what they were getting paid was pretty fair, if not more than fair. As these workers have agreed to a denarius for a full day of work, they didn't, at this time in the morning, they didn't say it was unfair or bargained for more.

They went to work. They went into the vineyard and began working because they knew for the work that they were doing that the pay was fair. 6 a.m. was considered the first hour.

In verse 3 it says, And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And to them he said, You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give to you.

So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing and said to them, Why do you stand here idle all day?

[10 : 55] They said to him, Because no one has hired us, he said to them, You go into the vineyard too. So as we look at verses 3 through 7, the masters found more workers for the harvest.

Now we have five sets of workers who have five different total amounts of time they have worked in the harvest. These men, these men later on, and after the first hour, these men, they didn't agree. They didn't, they didn't barter, so to speak, in ways like the denarius. They trusted in what the master said and him saying, Whatever is right. So taking the master's word, they went in to the vineyard.

As the scripture says, they were idle. It doesn't mean that they were lazy. It just means that they were ready. They didn't have a job at the moment. That's why they were there in the marketplace looking for work, hoping that somebody would come to them and saying, Hey, I got some work. Come and work for me. That's the, when it says idle, don't get that wrong and thinking that they were lazy and which they weren't. Again, they didn't bargain for a wage.

[12 : 11] They were satisfied to go into the vineyard because the master said he would give whatever is right. Those he chose for his vineyard work worked willingly because of the promised wage or whatever is right.

So again, he chose his vineyard workers. He chose his vineyard workers. Our second aspect is the master keeps his word. The second aspect is the master keeps his word.

And when the evening came, verse eight, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last up to the first. As every good Jewish businessman would keep the law, Deuteronomy 24, 15 says, you shall give him his wages on the same day before the sun sets for he is poor and counts on it lest he cry against you to the Lord and you be guilty of sin.

So even in this parable, Jesus is keeping the law. And when those hired about the 11th hour came and those and when those who hired about the 11th hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now, when those hired came first, they thought they would receive more but each of them also received a denarius. That is verses nine and 10. Now, when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more but each of them also received a denarius.

[13 : 49] Although we have five different groups of laborers with five different total times of work, they each received the same thing, one denarius. Beginning with those, the master hired most recently the 11th hour, which was five.

Those guys got it pretty good. Worked one hour and got a denarius. Beginning with those that the master hired recently, 5 p.m., the foreman began to pay out the wages. The ninth hour, those that started at three.

The sixth hour, those that started at noon. The third hour, those that started at nine. And then the first hour, those that started at six. They all received what was agreed upon.

And as the master said to the others, whatever is right, which was one denarius each. It's a lot of grace there. It's a lot of grace given by the master to give those who came late, to give them the same, to give each of them all the same.

It may not have been much grace for those at the beginning that started at 6 a.m., but we're beginning to see just how God and how he works is much different from the way we think.

[15 : 03] So the denarius is a reference to eternal life in this parable. That is the wage that the laborers, again, the laborers being Christ followers, that's the wage that's talking about what we get. Because we choose to go do, follow the Lord, and we choose to do his work. Our wage is eternal life. Again, that's the denarius in this parable.

Verse 11 says, And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, These last worked only one hour. And you have made them equal to us who have been born, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.

Verse 11, it says, They grumbled at the master. James 5, 9, says, Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at the door. John chapter 6, verses 41 through 44 says, So the Jews grumbled about him because he said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. They said, Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

[16 : 26] How does he now say, I have come down from heaven? Jesus answered them, Do not grumble amongst yourselves. No one can come to me unless a father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.

The grumbling, which these guys were doing, as Jesus said, that he is the bread that came down from heaven, that same kind of grumbling is what the Jews did back in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 when God provided manna.

Those who worked all day and that very morning agreed to one denarius for pay. They didn't bargain more. They're now upset and accused the master of being unfair.

The wage was fair. Their wage was fair in the morning. But now, looking at the time, amount of work that the other laborers did, they considered their pay, one denarius, being unfair.

The morning of, they were very willing to work for one denarius. 1 Corinthians 4, 5 says, Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

[17 : 57] Then each one will receive his commendation from God. Not only are our actions and words visible and audible to everyone, but even more so, God knows what's at the center of our thoughts and desires.

Those who have been chosen by God and are now doing kingdom work or working the harvest, no matter the age of salvation, we have all been saved by the same grace.

Is your motivation that of a blessing God has given to a fellow brother or sister and are hoping for the same or maybe even jealous of it? Our motivation for our kingdom work must be the eternal life promised by God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1, 15 through 17 says, Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. Even when we're doing kingdom work, sometimes our thoughts get in the way.

[19 : 33] Sometimes what's happening with a fellow brother or sister gets in the way. As the Lord is blessing somebody else, do we praise with them? Do we have joy with them?

Or do we find ourselves jealous of what the Lord is doing in their lives? Or how the Lord is providing for them? The Master is faithful to keep his promise to you of what's to come.

The third aspect. The Master's grace is just. The Master's grace is just.

Verse 13 says, but he replied to one of them, friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?

[20 : 46] The Master, even though the first hour workers was confronting the Master, the Master's gracious and merciful even in his response. He reminded him, we both agreed this morning for a denarius for the work.

There were no issues. There were no issues in the morning when they agreed to it. And he says, you have no argument for what you have agreed. You have been given your fair wage.

It's now yours because you have completed your side of the agreement and I have completed mine. how often do we forget what's to come and what's been promised?

We see throughout the grace of God through the life of Christ, how often do we forget what's promised in all of that? In our own lives.

On our daily basis. 1 Peter chapter 5 verses 9 and 10. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

[22 : 06] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Just like the first group of laborers, and then the rest of the laborers, we are all doing the same work for the same outcome because of the same truth, God's grace.

Kingdom work is not easy. Kingdom work isn't about us, but the one who allows us to do the work by his grace. The thought and fact that one day we will be separated not from God, but from this world.

Think about that. We will be separated not from God, but we will be separated from this world.

Anyone have it tough?

Anyone struggling with something right now? This world and its sinfulness doesn't bring much happiness. there's some, but there's not much.

[23 : 25] We won't have to deal with the hardships of this world anymore. I take comfort in that. I look forward when Jesus comes back. I look forward to being with him.

God's love God. I can't imagine what it's going to be like, but I know what the Bible tells me and what it's going to be like, and I can't wait.

I can't wait to experience that. I can't wait to leave all the troubles of this world behind. All that gets me excited, but I also need reminders of God's grace every now and then, as I'm sure you do as well.

Our labor in the harvest must be and should be motivated by knowing we will eternally be in glory with the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. The master's promised payment in the parable was perfect and true.

The master held up his end of the agreement and the laborer held up his end. Because of the agreement there was no grounds for the first hour laborers to say the master was unfair.

[24 : 44] The master was just to the first hour laborers and gracious to the other four groups of laborers. the grace that the master give to the later four groups of workers of laborers.

How gracious I was of him, this master. have you received that grace, this amazing grace that this master poured out to these workers.

They were all doing the same work, all for the same reason. They were harvesting, just like we're called to do. We're called to harvest. There's a lost world out there that needs to hear the gospel. gospel. So again, as the first hour laborers thought this was unfair, it was just.

It was a just decision. There was no wrong in it, even though they thought there was. There was no wrong in the decision of the master to continue with their one denarius because that was agreed upon.

[26 : 12] It was just. verse 16 says, so the last will be first and the first last. Those he has chosen and has called each of us into kingdom work, working the harvest of the lost, who are ready to hear the gospel.

Let us always remember, no matter if we've been saved since early on or later in life, we are all working for and towards the same goal, to glorify God the Father in our working of the harvest. again, the main idea of the kingdom work is, your kingdom work is a reflection of your gratitude for God's grace. everything about what God does is just.

We have no place to accuse the Father of being unfair. You will work the kingdom harvest longer than others, but you don't have the right to say they don't deserve eternal life just because they haven't been a Christian an amount of time you think is right.

I think of the impact of the criminal that was on the cross next to Jesus. His life in Christ wasn't long at all, God's God's God's glory and God's glory.

[27 : 47] Think about the testimony of his life and how many it's reached and touched for a man who was a Christian for a few hours.

God's God's love to God's love to God's to God's We all finish the work of the harvest the same with God eternally.

Let that promise be your motivation for all you do in your life. Everything. The promise that we will be with him eternally should be the filter of what we do in our lives.

It should be the joy that we have in our lives. It should be the desire that we have in our lives to see the lost come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

1 Thessalonians 4, 17 says, Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

[28 : 56] And so we will always be with the Lord. That's what we're working towards. What a promise. We will always be with the Lord.

Are you looking forward to that? What a day that's going to be?

Just like the song says, what a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see. I think that's how it goes. to wrap up this parable.

This parable is kind of an answer to Peter in the previous chapter 19. Verse 27 says, Then Peter said in reply, See, we have left everything and followed you.

what then will we have? What then will we have? Because this was about the rich man and he was asking what, asked Jesus what he needed to do to go to heaven.

[30 : 22] And as Jesus said, do this commandment, do this commandment, do this commandment. And as he said, he did them all, even though he's probably most likely lying about it, Jesus said, then sell everything that you have and follow me.

And as the rich man couldn't do it, that's when Peter says, we've done all this. What do we have? What do we get? So this parable is an answer to that question. Again, chapter 20, verse one, for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of the house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

This is all about us. How we approach God's grace, how we view God's grace. God's grace. Again, it's not about who's doing this much.

It's not about who's doing that much, but it's about glorifying God by doing the work of the kingdom. It doesn't matter what they're doing because the moment you take your eyes and your focus off Christ is the moment you begin to have the attitude of the first hour laborers.

[31 : 54] It does nobody any good to do that. It does yourself no good to have that mindset, to have that attitude. it hurts the kingdom. Again, as I look forward to it and as I think about my salvation and I think about my past and I think about how I still sin, what did I do to deserve what God has given me?

Nothing. The grace that God has given me in my sinfulness, the grace that God has given you in your sinfulness, we bring nothing to the table.

But he says, I have something for you. I want you to have it, but you have to accept it. You have to come to me. This is free. Understand it's free.

Because my son went to the cross because of how sinful you are. Because he was all holy as he lived on earth. Because he was holy, he was the perfect and the only satisfactory payment for our sin.

And as he died on that cross, those who would trust in who he said he was as a savior of the world, they would trust in that, they would believe in that and have new life.

[33 : 32] New life in Christ. A relationship with God now. Once before, you could never have a relationship with God because of your unholiness and God's holiness.

But as Christ lived his life righteously, those 33 years, the righteousness that he lived was given to us.

But we have to trust in it. We have to believe in it. We have to have faith in it. And as that faith leads to obedience.

Obedience to do the harvest work. To go out and make the name of Jesus known. To go out there and be Christ. Not because we have to, but it should be, our motivation should be because of the, all the outpouring of grace that God has given us.

Have you ever really thought about the grace that God has given you? What has delivered you from? The adjust, the adjustment or adjust, let yourself, let yourself work and rest in the promises of God's grace only.

[34 : 59] God's grace that he's given you is for you. He's got plenty of grace to go around. Focus on the grace that he's given you and dwell in it.

Think about it. Praise him for it. Give him glory for it. Tell others about the grace that God has given you. The application questions.

How often do you dwell on the grace God has given you? Write down recent moments when you've witnessed God's grace. Did you thank God?

Take some time to praise and worship him for what he's done for you. If you've never professed Jesus as Lord and Savior and you, and you know that you're a sinner and you know you're destined for eternity away from God out of God's presence in hell and you're ready.

God is calling your name and you're ready to answer that call because again, he chooses us. You're ready to make that, to make that known and you're ready to declare it to the world.

[36 : 17] Come and, come and tell me, come and tell Pastor Mike, Pastor Tyler, the elders. We want to rejoice with you and we want to be joyful with you. It's the greatest thing that you could, greatest decision you could ever make in your life.

And if you do make that decision, we want to know about it. Not, not for our numbers, not for anything else that makes this church look better, but because of what God has done, he's given us grace.

And if you're struggling with anything in life right now, if you need prayer, come and talk to us with that too. But if you're ready to proclaim Jesus as your Lord and Savior, afterwards, come down and tell us, Pastor Mike, whoever, Pastor Tyler, we want to hear about it.

We want to celebrate with you. Just like this morning, we want to see you get baptized. let's pray. Father, I thank you for this time that we can open your word.

And as we see your son tell these parables and what they mean for us. Father, I thank you and I praise you for what you've done with your word that you have kept it. Nobody has defiled it.

[37 : 30] Nobody has changed it. Father, you've kept it complete for us. Thank you, Father. Thank you for being holy. Thank you for being sovereign. that your grace will never run out.

We can never, we can never outgive what you've given us. Father, I thank you for sending your son to take the wrath of our sin upon himself. And Father, I pray that we as believers, as Christ followers, we would make the name of Jesus known.

We would proclaim it to those around us wherever we are. Father, and Father, again, I thank you for my relationship with you. Father, if there's those in this room that do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior and you're calling their name and they're ready to proclaim it, Father, give them the boldness to step out and say who they are now in you.

It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.