

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Matthew 20:1-16

INTRODUCTION

- There is within us a mindset that we “deserve” something, and when that something is not given to us, or we see someone receive more than us, there is cry of, “It’s not fair!”
- This is the exact opposite of what the Lord Jesus taught; we are not to be served, but to serve (John 13:4-17)
- Essentially the problem is a fixation on “self” (2 Timothy 3:1-2)
- Many “churches”, instead of rebuking this selfish spirit, are actually catering for it, by watering down their message, so that there is nothing offensive and turning the “worship” into entertainment to gratify man’s flesh
- Peter had asked the Lord, “What shall we have therefore?” (19:27)
- The disciples at times exhibited a sense of entitlement from God (Mark 10:37)
- *Dispensationally* the parable contrasts the Jews and Gentiles
 - ✓ The Jews were God’s chosen people, all the way back to Abraham
 - ✓ To the Jews, the Lord sent prophets, “daily rising up early” (Jeremiah 7:25)
 - ✓ The Jews “bore the heat of the day” in that they were given the law with its heavy demands, while Gentiles in this dispensation are not under the demands of the law
 - ✓ The complaint of the first labourers “thou hast made them equal unto us”, is a marvellous truth for Gentile believers (Eph 2:19)
- *Soteriologically* the parable demonstrates that salvation is by grace alone

- ✓ The gift of eternal life is the same to all
- ✓ The thief on the cross who was saved at “the eleventh hour” went to the same paradise that the lifelong believer goes to
- The meaning of the parable can be gleaned from the statement at the end of 20:15, “Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”
- The parable emphasises the undeserved grace of God toward man
- On the other hand it shows us the appropriate response to God’s gracious dealings with us

I. THE REQUIREMENT OF LABOURERS

A. Christ’s invitation to sinners is a call to labour

1. Those who come to Christ find rest, but also take his yoke upon them (Matthew 11:28-30)
2. Our works are not *for* justification, but come *from* it
3. We are saved to serve (Ephesians 2:10)

B. There is a harvest to labour in

1. The fields are white already to harvest (John 4:35)
2. The Great Commission calls us to this harvest (Mark 16:15)
3. Yet many stand “all the day idle”

C. The householder’s urgency

1. God is the initiator, first seeking the labourers (1 John 4:19)
2. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9)
3. There is an urgency to finish the work before the night comes (John 9:4)

D. Every available worker is called to the task (Matthew 9:37-38)

1. God is looking for availability (cf. Isaiah 6:8)
2. God's work must be the first priority in the believer's life (Matthew 6:33)

E. The response to the call

1. Those hired first bargained
2. Those hired later trusted

II. THE RIGOUR OF LABOUR

A. The hired labourer is under the command of the master

1. "Ye are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

B. The Lord sets his workers in their place of labour

1. He gives "to every man his work" (Mark 13:34)
2. He sets the members in the body (1 Corinthians 12:18)
3. "When God calls, God equips" (Exodus 35:30-35)

C. The service requires hard work

1. Sacrifice (Luke 14:33)
2. Perseverance (1 Corinthians 15:58)

III. THE REWARD FOR LABOUR

A. The reckoning is certain

1. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10)

B. The reckoning is just

1. The Lord is the Righteous Judge (Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:8)

2. There is no dispute (Romans 9:20)
- C. God rewards according to his standard, not man's estimation
1. There will be many who think they will receive great rewards who will be disappointed.
 2. There will be others who go to judgment expecting to receive nothing, yet will have great rewards
 3. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." (Matthew 20:16)
- D. Envy shows an absence of grace in the soul
1. The first workers are the self-righteous who think that their works justify them before God (cf. Luke 15:28-30)
 2. The second workers are the humble recipients of grace who know they deserve nothing good from God and trust the Master to do what is right

CONCLUSION

1. What is your attitude in the service of Christ?
2. Is it, "What shall we have therefore?"
3. If Jesus Christ is my Lord, then I simply serve him in love, obey his commands, without regard for any recompense, trusting that whatever is right, he will give me
4. Like Paul, we must say, without reservation or expectation, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)
5. We need to guard against any hint of jealousy or envy towards others who have received God's grace
6. Those who compare themselves with others are not wise (2 Corinthians 10:12)
7. It is never too late to start serving God