

# The Laborers in the Vineyard

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus often used parables in His teaching – using an everyday illustration to describe a spiritual truth. In this parable, Jesus talked about a landowner hiring laborers for his vineyard. As we study this, we are going to attempt to identify the MAIN point. Once we do that, we will see how we can apply this in our lives.

## Context

- After speaking with a rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22), Jesus assured His disciples of their reward (Matthew 19:27-29) – they “left everything” to follow Jesus; they would be rewarded many times over
- He then said the “first will be last; and the last, first” (Matthew 19:30) – He repeated this after the parable (v. 16)
- The kingdom of heaven was not a place for those seeking prominence or who valued worldly wealth – it was for those who would be (or were willing to be) considered “last” in this life

## Basic Point

- The landowner went out to find laborers to work in his vineyard – when he found them, he called them; he went out at various times throughout the day and the invitation was the same
- Finally, at the end of the day, the laborers received wages for their labor – each one received the same reward; this demonstrated the landowner’s generosity (God’s grace)
- The main point of this parable is that the Lord is looking for those who will work in His kingdom

## Examination

- The landowner went out at five times during the day – early morning, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours; the ones hired in the early morning agreed to work for a denarius (v. 2), a standard day’s wage; the standard work day of a laborer was 12 hours; so some of these men would only work for one hour
- At evening, the laborers were called to receive their wages, beginning with the last group (v. 8) – those who worked one hour received a denarius (v. 9); those who worked all day expected to receive more, but didn’t and complained (v. 10-12); the Lord (landowner) was not being unfair, He was being generous (v. 13-14)
- There is a two-fold warning in this parable – first, don’t resent the Lord for rewarding others as He sees fit (cf. Jonah 3:4-5, 10; 4:2); second, don’t resent others for having done less work (cf. Romans 14:4)

## **Application**

- We must be willing to work for the Lord – He created us for doing good works (Ephesians 2:10)
- We must recognize that time is short – we must work while we have the opportunity (John 9:4); we do not know what “hour” it is; our life is a vapor (James 4:14)
- We must not consider ourselves as better or more important than others – this is arrogance (Luke 18:11; Romans 12:3)
- We must be aware that all of us are working together – unity in a common cause (Ephesians 4:3, 13, 16)
- We must appreciate the grace of God in His reward – do not take this for granted (Ephesians 2:4-5), for ourselves or others; it is available to all (Titus 2:11), even the worst of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)

## **Conclusion**

- The Lord is looking for laborers in His kingdom – He offers a great reward for answering the call
- Let’s work diligently for the Lord, no matter how much time we have until the end