

## Family Stories

### The Upside Down Economy of God

Matthew 19:27-20:16

- The parable of the workers in the vineyard – only in Matthew
- In the context of the 'Rich Young Ruler' (19:16-22); the challenge of wealth & the gospel (19:23-26); Peter's comment on the disciple's self-sacrifice (19:27-30)

## Understanding the Parable

Matthew 20:1-16

## The Place

- A vineyard in Israel
- At the time of harvest
- Get the grapes in at the right time

## The Action

- The landowner goes to the town square and hires labourers early in the morning (5:00 a.m.)
- He returns to the square and hires more workers at 9:00, noon, 3:00, and 5:00

- At the end of the day each worker is paid 1 denarius starting with the last hired
- Those hired first grumble that they are not paid more than the others (v12)

## The Characters & Concepts

- The **landowner** evokes the image of God who is concerned about the labourers (v4, 6-7)

## The Characters & Concepts

- The **workers** in the vineyard represent Israel or the church of Matthew

## The Characters & Concepts

- Raises the question:  
What is our attitude  
in service for God?

## The Characters & Concepts

- A **Denarius** represents the gift of 100 fold/eternal life (19:29)

## The Characters & Concepts

- A Parable moving us beyond competition /comparison – be grateful for God's generosity

## Application of the Parable



*Do we identify with the  
grumbling worker?*

- Does God seem unjust or unfair?
- Even though a contract has been signed (v2,13)

*Do we ever try to  
bargain with God?*

- See Jacob in Genesis 28:18-22 establishing parameters with God

*The parable is about the  
Divine compassion of God.*

- God is a good God (Psalm 145:9)
- We are called to imitate the generosity of God (Ephesians 5:1-2)

*The parable is about grace  
not our merit.*


- Grace for all not just for us – one hour of pay will not provide a family's supper

*The privilege of service*

- Not a cost but a gift
- Not about clocking our hours but keeping our gaze upon the Father

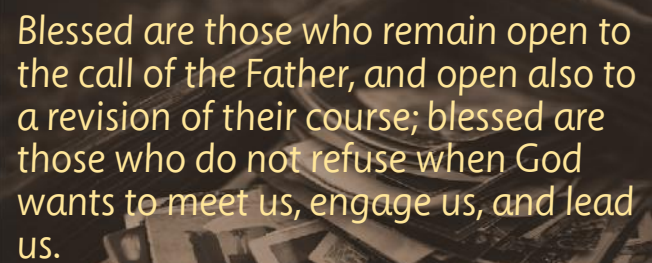
*Service draws us closer to the  
Landowner – the Father.*

- Becoming a friend of God
- It is not about drudgery but about relationship with God



*Each of us has our place  
in the vineyard.*

- Keep trusting in the wisdom of the Landowner and keep saying 'yes' to him



Blessed are those who remain open to the call of the Father, and open also to a revision of their course; blessed are those who do not refuse when God wants to meet us, engage us, and lead us.

Helmut Thielicke



*We will not see the goodness  
of God with a jealous eye.*

- 'Are you envious because I am generous?' (v15b) literally reads 'Is your eye evil because I am good?'
- It is all about God's goodness and amazing grace