

Day 20, Matthew 20

by David Servant

God rewards us based on how faithfully we take advantage of the opportunities He gives us, and we can receive the same reward in the end as any evangelist if we are faithful with the gifts and opportunities to serve that God gives us.

Scripture: Matthew 19:28, Matthew 20:1, Matthew 20:28, Matthew 20:34, Mark 10:35, Luke 12:48

Topics: "Faithful Service", "Kingdom Greatness"

Description

David Servant preaches on the parable of the laborers, emphasizing that God rewards us based on how faithfully we utilize the opportunities He gives us, regardless of the duration of service. He highlights the importance of being faithful with the gifts and opportunities to serve that God provides, as seen in the parable. Jesus teaches about the upside-down order of His kingdom, where greatness is found in serving others, exemplified by His own sacrificial death. Despite internal strife among His disciples, Jesus addresses conflicts promptly, setting an example for all leaders to handle confrontation effectively. Encouragement is given for those seeking healing, reminding them of Jesus' unwavering compassion and urging them not to be discouraged by naysayers.

Transcript

At first, it might seem unfair that the laborers who worked twelve hours were paid the same as those who worked only one hour. But several important facts need to be considered. First, those who worked all day were paid a fair wage, and a wage they agreed on before they began. They weren't cheated and had no legitimate reason to gripe. Those who worked just one hour and received a full-day's wage, however, had good reason to rejoice.

Jesus wasn't teaching that the thief on the cross, who repented during the last hours of his wasted life, and the prophet Jeremiah, who faithfully served God under persecution for decades, will both receive the same reward in the end. Notice that the one-hour laborers only worked for the final hour of the day because no one hired them until then (20:7). They would have gladly worked a full day had they been given the chance. So we learn that God will reward us based upon how faithfully we take advantage of the opportunities He gives us. To whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). Perhaps you have not been given the supernatural gifts that God gives to evangelists. Perhaps you don't have the opportunity to speak to stadiums full of people. Yet you can receive the same reward in the end as any evangelist if you will be faithful with the gifts and opportunities to serve that God gives to you. That is what Jesus is

teaching in the parable of the laborers.

As Jesus ascended from Jericho towards Jerusalem, the apostles believed that He was about to establish His kingdom there (see Luke 19:11), even though He plainly told them that He would die there (20:17-19). He had very recently promised the twelve that, when He would sit on His "glorious throne," they would also "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:28). They apparently assumed that their exaltation was just a matter of days or hours away, and the mother of James and John was not satisfied that her two boys would be seated on two random thrones among twelve. She wanted them to be second and third in command under Jesus, helping Him rule over all of Israel! Opportunity was knocking for the ambitious!

It is quite possible that James and John put their mother up to her request (see Mark 10:35), which certainly revealed their spiritual state at that point. I'm amazed that Jesus didn't explode with anger or weep with discouragement. Rather, He patiently taught the twelve about the upside-down order of His kingdom, where the great ones are not those who are served, but those who serve. Jesus certainly preached what He practiced, setting a perfect example by humbly dying for us, the ultimate act of service. The Servant-King never ceases to amaze and inspire us every day.

Pastors, be encouraged that even the Great Shepherd had to deal with strife in His little flock! After word leaked of James and John's request to be their bosses, the 10 resented them. I'm sure they were glad that Jesus dealt with the problem immediately, a great lesson for all leaders to learn. Don't avoid confrontation that is needful, as neglecting it only makes the inevitable worse.

Here's some encouragement for those who need healing: Jesus opened the eyes of two blind beggars because they would not be discouraged by those who told them to be quiet, and because He "was moved with compassion" (Matt. 19:34). Has Jesus' compassion waned since then? Certainly not. He cares about you! So just like those two beggars, don't let anyone discourage you either!

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