

# How God Rewards His Servants Matt. 19:27 to 20:16

by R.A. Torrey

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*The sermon teaches that the quality of service counts more than the quantity with God, and that those who serve for love and in loving trust will get exceeding abundantly above what they have earned or expected.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 19:27

**Topics:** "Service and Sacrifice", "God's Rewards"

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## Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes how God rewards His servants, illustrating that sacrifices made for Christ are never in vain. He explains that true service is not about the quantity of work done but the quality and heart behind it, as demonstrated in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The sermon highlights that God's grace often exceeds our expectations, and those who serve out of love will receive abundant rewards, regardless of when they begin their service. Torrey warns against the dangers of envy and murmuring when comparing our rewards to others, reminding us that God is sovereign and just in His dealings. Ultimately, the message encourages believers to trust in God's goodness and to serve faithfully, knowing that their efforts will be rewarded in His perfect timing.

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## Transcript

(Compare Mark 10:28-31; Luke 18:28-30)

### DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Reward of Sacrifice for Christ, 19:27-30 What occasioned Peter's question? (vv. 21, 22, 23-26.) What did Peter say they had done? Was that true? (Luke 5:11, 27, 28.) Who must forsake all? (Luke 14:33.) What makes it very easy to forsake all? (Phil. 3:8.) On the basis of having forsaken all, what did Peter wish to know? What did this question show? Are there any today anxious to know what they are going to get for forsaking all for Christ? If one appreciates what Christ has done for him and really loves Him, will he ask such questions as this?

What did Jesus say they would have? Are thrones promised unto the twelve alone? (Rev. 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3.) What is the necessary condition of our reigning with Him? (2 Tim. 2:12.) When were they to have these thrones? What is meant by "in the regeneration"? (Is. 65:17; 66:22; Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:5; 2 Peter 3:13.) What did Jesus say would be the reward of those who left anything for His name's sake? What was it they

were to receive a hundredfold? (Mark 10:30.) Is that true? Does it pay, then, to make sacrifices for Christ?

What were they to receive with the hundredfold? (Mark 10:30.) Is that persecution to be dreaded? (Matt. 5:10, 12; Acts 5:41.) When is this hundredfold to be received? (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:29, 30.) How many of those who have left anything for Christ's name's sake are thus to receive? To what was the expression "inherit eternal life," a reference? (Mark 10:17.) What warning did Jesus utter lest any should misunderstand these words? What suggested the need of this warning (v. 27)? 2.

The Call to Service, 20:1-7 By what parable did Jesus explain these words? What gave rise to the utterance of this parable (c. 19:27-30)? What is the connection between the parable and Peter's question? What is the central thought that it is the purpose of the parable to teach? (19:30; 20:16.) Why is it that many first shall be last and many last first (vv. 12, 13, 14)? What is the greatest historic fulfillment of this truth? (c. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28-30; Ro. 9:30-33.) What other fulfillment of it was there in that day? (Matt. 21:31, 32; Luke 18:13, 14.)

Are these the only fulfillments? Is there likely to be a fulfillment in our day in America and the heathen nations (or in the favored and neglected classes)? Who is represented by the householder in this parable? (13:27; 21:33.) What is represented by the vineyard? (Is. 5:7 and c. 21:33, 43.) Who are represented by those first called into the vineyard? Whom did Jesus have in mind (c. 19:27)? What does the penny represent? How much does the penny equal of our money? Was it a fair day's wages?

Anything taught by that? (Eph. 6:8; Heb. 6:10.) Where were they sent to work? From whom must the call come before we can work in the vineyard? Did any start to work before called? Does any one ever apply to God before God calls him? (John 15:16.) To what was the call? To what had Peter's own call been? (Mark 1:17.) Who are represented by those called at the third hour? Did the householder make as definite a bargain with them? Did they demand it? Why not? Which was the higher type of service?

Which did the larger amount of service? Which counts most with God, quantity or character of service? Which got the larger reward in proportion to the amount of service rendered? Is there any lesson in that? If a man works for the reward, how great a reward will he get? If he works in simple trust, leaving the question of amount of reward to God, how much will he get? (Eph. 3:20.) Did the householder keep his promise that he would give what is right? Can you give any illustration of one called at the sixth or ninth hour? (Gen. 12:1-4; Josh. 24:2, 3.)

What is the last hour he went out? How many hours were there in the working day? What did he find? What were all the men that he found outside of the vineyard at different hours doing? Is there any lesson in that? What question does he put to them? What question does God put to every idler? 3. The Rewards of Service, vv. 8-16 What was their answer? Was that a sufficient answer? Would any other answer have been sufficient? Can any of us give that answer? Is there any comfort in this parable to those who have had call after call and not responded?

To what call had these laborers responded? What did he say? Have we any illustration in the Bible of one called at the eleventh hour? (Luke 23:40-43.) When was a reckoning made? What does that mean? (2 Tim. 4:8.) What was done at even? What does that represent? (2 Cor. 5:10.) What does the steward of the parable represent? (Heb. 3:6; John 5:27; Rev. 2:7, 10, 17, 28.) What was given those who began at the eleventh hour? Had they a right to expect that much? Why did they receive more than they had a right to expect?

Is it only a believer's salvation, then, that is a matter of grace? In what case is a believer's reward a matter of abounding grace? What was their feeling when they got so much? What will our feeling be when rewards are distributed if we have served from love? What did those who began early in the day expect? Had they any right to expect that? What does this unfounded expectation represent? Will those who expect the largest reward get the largest reward? What did they get? If they had worked from the first hour and not bargained with the Lord but just trusted it all to Him, would they have received only a penny?

Is this intended to teach that if one enters work at the eleventh hour he will get just as much as if he had entered at the first hour? Is it intended to teach that all God's servants get the same reward? (1 Cor. 3:8; Luke 19:11-27.) Does it teach that those who bear the burden and heat of the day will get no more than those who work only one cool evening hour? (2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Cor. 4:17.) Does it teach that one hour's service in the spirit of humble trust, that leaves the reward as a matter of grace to God, will be at least as abundantly rewarded as twelve hours' legal service that tries to drive a close bargain with God and seeks a reward as a matter of debt?

How did those who had worked the twelve hours receive their pay? Had they a right to murmur? Will there really be murmuring against God's distribution of reward? Against what is this a warning? Against whom did they murmur? Was that a slight offense? Against whom is all murmuring in the last analysis? (Ex. 16:8.) What was the Lord's answer? What were the three points in the answer? (See Revised Version.) Was the answer sufficient? What thought is contained in the question, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own"? (Ex. 33:19; Jer. 27:5; Ro. 9:15-21; Eph. 1:11.)

Has any one a right to call God to account? (Ro. 9:19, 20.) Do any ever attempt to do it? What is God's answer to all who would call Him to account (v. 15)? While God does as He will, what does He always will to do? Where did the householder show that real fault lay (v. 15)? When men murmur at God's dealings is the difficulty with Him or their vision? How did the Lord close the parable? Why are the last oftentimes first and the first last? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

## 1. God

### (1). His sovereignty:

Calls whom He will, 1-8; calls when He will, 1-8; rewards as He will, 9-15; has a right to do what He will with His own, 15; under no obligation to explain to any one why He does as He does, 15; does as He pleases, but always pleases to do right, 13, 15.

### (2). His truth:

Never does less than He agrees, 13.

### (3). His grace:

Often does better than He agrees, 9; men's complaints at His dealings rise from the blindness of their own envy, and not from the lack of His goodness.

### (4). He confounds all gainsayers, 13-15.

## 2. Service

### (1). The call:

The call of God is a call to service, 1, 2, etc.; He alone can call to service, 1, 6, 7; some are called to longer, larger and heavier service than others, 1, 2, 6, 12; the important question not when we are called, but how we treat the call when it comes, 1-16; those called last entered the vineyard at the first call (no encouragement in this parable to those who hear call after call and fail to respond), 6, 7; the first called may do most and the last called best, 11, 12.

(2). The reward of service:

Quality of service counts more than quantity with God, 9-16; one who serves for hire will get just what he earns, 10, 13; one who serves for love and in loving trust leaves the question of reward to God's bounty will get exceeding abundantly above what he has earned or expected, 9; one hour's service in a spirit of humble trust that leaves the reward as a matter of grace to God, will be as abundantly rewarded as twelve hours of legal service that tries to drive a close bargain with God and seeks a reward as a matter of debt, 9-15; compare 19:27; comparison of service and over-estimating our service leads to expectation of large reward, dissatisfaction with reward given and murmuring against God, 11, 12; one who serves for love will get a penny plus satisfaction; one who serves for hire will get a penny minus satisfaction.

3. Election

Election is primarily to service, 1, 8; God elects many to get more than they earn, 9; He never elects any to get less than they earn, 13, 14; get a part in the election of grace, by a faith in God's goodness that asks no questions and tries to drive no bargains with God, 3-9.

4. Christ

The judge and dispenser of rewards, 8; sent by the Father, 8; summons the laborers to receive their reward, 8; following Him involves forsaking all (fellowship in His sufferings), 27; brings a throne (fellowship in His glory), 28; sacrifice for His name's sake brings a hundredfold now and eternal life hereafter, 29.

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