

The Laborers in the Vineyard

Read: Read Matthew 19:16-30

What was the problem of the rich young man that turned him away from Jesus?

What was Peter's problem in Matthew 19:27?

How were the two men similar or dissimilar in their thinking? Explain

The disciples had similar questions a number of times.

Check Matthew 18:1 and 20:20-24. How are the events alike? Different?

Does Jesus say there's a "payoff" for faithfulness? If so, what?

Read: Matthew 20:1-16

A key to understanding this parable is recognizing who the different characters represent.

The owner of the vineyard: _____

Those hired early in the morning: _____

Those hired at 5pm, the 11th hour: _____

For the first workers, the owner promised a day's wage for a day's work. For the later ones he promised "whatever is right". Why didn't the later workers get that agreement more clearly spelled out?

- A) They didn't have collective bargaining.*
- B) They trusted the owner.*
- C) They were grateful for any wage that day.*
- D) They weren't really interested or concerned.*
- E) It would have complicated Jesus' story too much.*

According to Leviticus 19:13, an employer was required to pay out his wages at the end of each day. What might have been the owner's reasons for paying the last men first?

Discuss both sides of this issue: Were the first workers justified in their criticism of the owner?

Yes, because.....

No! They were...

Read the parable again, especially V12-15. What would you say is the central point of the parable?

For Us:

Rate our congregation's welcome of new Christians on a scale of 1-10.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1 = cold, distant, disinterested. 10 = go out of our way to celebrate our shared faith)

Rate your own personal attitude toward new Christians on a scale of 1-10.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1 = resent them when treated equal. 10 = make the first move to welcome to welcome others as brother and sisters in Christ)

In what way is your answer like that of the first workers in the vineyard?

In what way is your response an occasion for repentance?

Judging from Luke 23:39-43, what is God's attitude toward the "latecomer" in the Christian faith? Why?

Read: Luke 17:7-10.

What does Jesus remind the faithful, lifelong Christian about?

What is Jesus saying to you?

Read: Ephesians 2:8-9.

How does this passage address the idea that God's gifts of life and salvation are a "payoff" for our goodness or righteousness?

In the face of God's grace, what becomes of our boasting?