



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Gracious Rewards!

Matthew 20:1-16

Message #55 of 80 – S1088

Sermon given on March 17, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Gracious Rewards!

Matthew 20:1-16

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 20**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Gracious Rewards!**
- We are going to look at the first half of chapter 20 today.
- It is a continuation of what we saw in the second half of chapter 19.
- Let's look at this parable.
- **Matthew 20:1**
- This parable is only recorded by Matthew.
- It follows immediately after the account of the rich young ruler.
- Peter then asked what he and the other disciples would get since they had sacrificed everything to follow Jesus.
- Jesus promised a great reward for their faithful service.
- Jesus then tells this parable to illustrate what He means.
- The key to understanding this parable is that it is focused on rewards for following Christ.
- Some interpret it to be about salvation. Salvation is not a reward.
- If it was, it would not be the gracious gift the Bible teaches it is (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- No one can earn salvation. That is what the rich young ruler believed and went away sad because what he believed couldn't save him.
- Jesus is responding to Peter about the rewards of faithfully following Jesus in this life.
- Jesus responded by telling Peter that the rewards would come 'in the regeneration', or when Jesus came at the Second Coming.
- Jesus is using a real-life activity to explain a spiritual truth.

- The landowner is Christ. The vineyard is the lost world.
 - The laborers are believers called by Christ to labor in the fields.
 - God could do the work of harvesting Himself but chooses to call people to join Him in the work.
 - **Matthew 20:2**
 - A denarius is a Roman coin and was equal to a day's wages.
 - A day of work was 12 hours. Six days a week.
 - As believers, we are all called by God to go into His vineyard and labor.
 - For each of us that means something different.
 - Every believer was created by God and equipped for the thing God assigned them to do (**Ephesians 2:10**).
- For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**
- We were created to serve God by doing the works He prepared for each of us.
 - **Matthew 20:3**
 - The Jews reckoned time starting at sunrise or about 6 am.
 - The third hour would be about 9 am.
 - **Matthew 20:4**
 - Notice - 'whatever is right' – no set amount of compensation is agreed upon, just 'whatever is right'.
 - The laborers had to trust that the landowner would do what was right.
 - **Matthew 20:5-7**
 - The landowner goes out at noon, 3 pm, and then 5 pm, an hour before the end of the workday.
 - These last laborers had been standing in the marketplace for eleven hours waiting for someone to hire them.
 - They were willing and available but hadn't been given a task to do.
 - At the end of the workday, it is time to settle accounts.
 - **Matthew 20:8-9**
 - Jewish law required laborers to be paid at the end of the day so they could feed their families (**Leviticus 19:13**).
- You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.**

- Even though they had only worked one hour, they needed the same to feed their family as those who had worked all day.
 - Imagine what you might be thinking if you had worked twelve hours and then saw those who only worked one hour get a whole denarius.
 - **Matthew 20:10-12**
 - Jesus is describing how most people would view this situation.
 - These men are comparing themselves to those who only worked one hour.
 - Their primary focus is on themselves.
 - They see this as a matter of unfairness.
 - **Matthew 20:13-14**
 - It wasn't a matter of fairness; it was a matter of grace.
 - The landowner gave those who worked all day what he promised to give them.
 - He gave to those who worked less what he wanted to give them as an expression of gracious generosity.
 - The problem is not with what the landowner did, but with the attitude of these laborers regarding what he did.
 - **Matthew 20:15**
 - It is not illegal to do what you wish with your own things.
 - God had placed financial requirements upon His people.
 - But once those obligations were met, they could use whatever was left any way that was not sinful.
 - There was an expectation that they would be generous (**Proverbs 22:9**).
- He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.**
- God's people should be generous because God is generous.
 - Jesus concludes this parable by repeating what He said at the end of chapter 19.
 - **Matthew 20:16**
 - This parable calls us to examine our attitude toward serving God.
 - Why does anyone serve God?
 - The right answer is because that is what they were made to do.
 - I was created by God to serve Him.

- It is not about the rewards I will get, but it blesses me that there are rewards for serving Him.
- There are three things we should consider about serving Christ.
- First – **Who should serve Christ?**
- Everyone who hears Christ's call to serve.
- To hear Christ's call, we must be listening and willing to serve.
- Everyone who is willing will be equipped to serve where Christ wills.
- Second – **When should we serve Christ?**
- As soon as we hear Christ's call.
- In the parable, the landowner went out several times and found laborers who were willing to respond to his call to go out into the vineyard.
- Some people respond early in their lives, like David.
- I was in the middle of my life when I responded.
- Others might not respond until very late in their lives.
- The right time to respond is when you become aware of Christ's call to serve Him.
- Third – **How should we serve Christ?**
- In this parable we have a bad example of how to serve Christ.
- It is possible to serve Christ in a manner that is not rewarded.
- The key to serving Christ in a manner worthy of reward is faithfulness.
- Three traits of faithful laborers in Christ's vineyard are:
 - **Humility**
 - **Focus**
 - **Trust**
- First trait – **A faithful servant of Christ is Humble.**
- There is no place for pride in the heart of a servant of Christ.
- You did not choose to serve Him, He chose you.
- You responded to His call, and even that was God at work in you.
- Your service was appointed to you by Him.
- The Holy Spirit equipped you to do the work.
- Any success you might experience was Jesus working through you.
- Second trait – **A faithful servant of Christ is Focused.**

- In the parable, the servants who worked all day were upset when they compared themselves with the others who they feel didn't work as hard as they did.
- To be a faithful servant we must focus on our own service and not on the service of others.
- Third trait – **A faithful servant of Christ trusts God's character.**
- The servants who complained were questioning the goodness of the landowner. They thought he was being unfair.
- Listen – God is not fair – at least not in the way we decide fairness.
- God is just, holy, good, perfect, and loving.
- Everything He does is right or just, holy, good, perfect, and is an expression of His love for you and for the rest of the world.
- A faithful servant trusts God even when it seems like things are not fair.
- Serving God is not a career or a job. Serving God is not a duty.
- Serving God is not a pathway to fame, fortune, success, or popularity.
- Serving God is a calling. Jesus calls and we respond.
- Jesus assigns us the tasks He wants us to do.
- He is the Master, and we are the servants.
- And as servants we are expected to be faithful.
- When we stand before Jesus, we will be evaluated based on our faith and faithfulness.
- It is our faith in Christ that will bring us into Christ's presence and it our faithfulness to Him that He will reward.
- It is not the works themselves that will be rewarded but the faithfulness to the works Jesus appointed to us.
- The person who is faithful to the one thing Jesus called them to do will be more blessed than the person who was faithful 99 times if he was appointed 100 tasks by Jesus.
- Be faithful.
- It is never too early to serve Christ and it is never too late.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us serve God faithfully!
- **Pray!**
- Worship Team plays the last song!