

"I Can Work With This"

September 21, 2014

Matthew 20:1-16

1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' 16 So the last will be first, and the first last."

It doesn't seem fair does it? That those workers who were in the vineyard all day received the same pay as those who worked for only an hour. The laborers complain, the laborers resent the landowner's payment decision. And it is like that in our faith too, We are jealous of God's equal forgiveness. But what we don't understand is that we are all made equal by God, with his compassion we are made as one.

It's our purpose to love and accept, no matter the circumstance. It may not be fair, it may not seem like it makes sense, but that's God's will. We may not be happy with his doing, we may be jealous of. It shouldn't matter how long we've known someone or what we know about them, as Disciples of Christ we need to love and accept all. We are not God, who are we to judge someone for how long they've been coming to church, what they did the night before, or whatever else we criticize people for? **It is our job to love others, but it is God's job to sort us out.**

Who belongs in God's kingdom? Entry to heaven is not by our own actions here on earth, but by God's grace and mercy. As Christians, we can strive to be perfect and live as righteously as we can but it is still up to God to judge us. **It is our job to love others, but it is God's job to sort us out.**

We are all equal in the eyes of God. Even East Carolina and UNC fans are equal in God's eyes. In our faith we are often frustrated with God for forgiving those who we think don't deserve it. Our problem is that it we don't decide who gets God's grace and mercy, that is up to Him. We are all children of God, and we are all humans who sin. Who are we to judge others? We are a part of his Kingdom where he is the landowner and we are his workers, and he can pay us whatever he sees fit. **It is our job to love others, but it is God's job to sort us out.**

In the scripture, the workers who were in the vineyard the whole day envy the workers who were only there for an hour. "Why should they receive the same pay as us?" they question the landowner. "You have made them equal to us." But the landowner replies, "is that not what we agreed on, the same wages?" In our faith, we agree to let God have all the power, he has the ability to decide who gets his compassion. And he chooses to bring us all together as one, as equals. What the laborers failed to understand, and what is difficult for us to understand today is that we don't need to worry why God chooses to do what he does. **Our only job is to love others, but it is God's job to sort us out.**

Growing up in youth group, I remember when a new kid would join the church and come to youth group Sunday night. It was always hard to be accepting of someone new, someone different. I would catch friends and even myself sometimes being judgmental of someone who didn't fit in quite right. They didn't wear the right clothes or say the right things or act like the rest of us. We are taught to be loving and open to everyone, but that's easier said than done isn't it? However we need to understand that it's not our place to judge others, we are not the ones who get to make the final

decision. Kids in youth group do not have the power to criticize a peer because they look or act different. Fast forward a few years and people are still judging, still jealous that at the end of the day, we all receive the same pay. Who are we to judge, who are we to question God's choices? **It is our job to love others, but it is God's job to sort us out.**

And it is in our human nature to be jealous that God treats us all the same. But we do not need to worry about the order God so chooses, because we all come together as equal recipients of his love and grace. He brings us all together as one body of Christ, no matter what. So, I challenge you to love others, and leave the judgment out of it. Let God worry about the rest. Let go and let God. Amen.