

# Matthew 20

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## God Deals Justly 1 - 16.

20.1. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

This parable follows on from Peter's statement in the previous chapter when he said to the Lord "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" He uses the illustration of a landowner who goes out early in the morning to find workers to work in his vineyard.

20.2. And after agreeing with the workers for the standard wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

He agreed with those he had hired to pay the standard wage for those days which was a Roman penny worth about seven and half pence.

20.3 - 4. When it was about nine o'clock in the morning, he went out again and saw others standing around in the marketplace without work. He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too, and I will give you whatever is right.'

At about nine o'clock he went to the marketplace and saw other men standing about doing nothing. He engaged them to go and work in his vineyard also and told them he would pay them a fair wage at the end of the day.

20.5. So they went. When he went out again about noon and three o'clock that afternoon, he did the same thing.

So they went to the work. The landowner went out again to the marketplace at 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock and employed those who were hanging around and agreed to pay the same wage to these.

20.6. And about five o'clock that afternoon he went out and found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why are you standing here all day without work?'

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon he found other men standing around and asked them why they were not working.

20.7. They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You go and work in the vineyard too.'

They replied that no one had hired them so he also told them to go and work in his vineyard. The point being made at this part of the illustration is the different times of day that these men were employed

20.8. When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and give the pay starting with the last hired until the first.'

At the end of the day the owner of the vineyard told his manager to call the workers to him that he might pay them starting with the last men who were hired.

20.9 - 10. When those hired about five o'clock came, each received a full day's pay. And when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each one also received the standard wage.

He paid those who had worked the least hours a full day's pay. The workers who had worked all day from early morning thought that they would be paid more. But each one received the standard wage.

20.11- 12. When they received it, they began to complain against the landowner, saying, 'These last fellows worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who bore the hardship and burning heat of the day.'

When they saw that they had received the same amount as those who had only worked for an hour they complained to the owner. It was not fair that those who had only worked a very short time should receive equal pay with those who had worked hard all through the burning hot sun all day.

20.13. And the landowner replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am not treating you unfairly. Didn't you agree with me to work for the standard wage?'

This might seem unjust to us also but the owner told them that he was not treating them unjustly they had agreed to work for the standard wage and that is what he paid them.

20.14. Take what is yours and go. I want to give to this last man the same as I gave to you.

Without further to do he told them to take their money and go. As the owner of the vineyard if he chose to pay the last man the same as them what was that to do with them.

20.15. Am I not permitted to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

It was no business of theirs if he chose to do with his money what he wanted to. If he wanted to be generous why should they be jealous.

20.16. So the last will be first, and the first last." For many are called, but few chosen."

The whole purpose of Jesus telling His disciples this parable is this concluding verse. The first to be called into the kingdom of heaven will have no advantage over those who enter in later. All are equal in the sight of God (Deuteronomy 10:17, Ephesians 6:9). There are many who hear the call of the gospel message but there are few in proportion who obey and are saved. It is Jesus Christ who will give out the rewards at his coming and no one can complain at what they may receive for God is a just God (Revelation 22: 12).

## **2. Jesus Foretells His Death for the Third Time 17 -19.**

20.17 - 18. As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve aside privately and said to them on the way, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn him to death,

On their way to Jerusalem Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and told them again the reason why they were going up to Jerusalem at this time. Those who were conspiring against Him would hand Him over to the chief priests and scribes and they will condemn Him to death.

20.19. and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely and crucified. Yet on the third day, he will be raised."

They in their turn will hand Him over to the Romans to be made fun of and to be flogged and then crucified. But on the third day He would triumphantly raised to life from the dead!

### **3. To Minister and not be Ministered to 20 - 28.**

20.20. Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling down she asked him for a favor.

The mother of James and John sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with them and kneeling in worship before Him asked a favour.

20.21. He said to her, "What do you want?" She replied, "Permit these two sons of mine to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

In response to Jesus asking her what the request was she asked him to allow her sons to sit one on His right hand and the other on the left. In chapter 19 verse 28 Jesus had promised His twelve disciples that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Perhaps it was in response to this that James and John sought to obtain a greater position than the other disciples.

20.22. But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." (NKJV)

Jesus tells them that they have no idea what they asking for and challenges them. Are they able to drink the cup that He is about to drink? (Matthew 26:39). The cup that He partook was our sins, the sins of the whole world! (2 Corinthians 5:21). They replied without realizing what He meant that they were. Were they able to be baptized with the baptism that He is baptized with? This baptism refers to His sufferings and death upon the cross. Yes they were was their bold reply!

20.23. He told them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to give. Rather, it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

Jesus foretells that they would indeed drink of His cup but to sit on His right hand and at His left was not His to give but will be given to whosoever the God the Father has chosen.

20.24. Now when the other ten heard this, they were angry with the two brothers.

When the other disciples heard what James and John had been up to they were not very happy.

20.25. But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them.

Jesus called the twelve disciples to Him and reminds them of a fact that they saw every day concerning the Romans that ruled over them. The rulers in Gentile nations rule with a rod of iron and dominate their people and those who are given positions of authority do the same thing.

20.26 - 27. It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave –

This must not be so among His followers it has to be the complete opposite. Whoever is given authority within Christ's church, His body, (Colossians 1:18) must serve Christ's people. Whoever wants to have first place must be a servant.

20.28. just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus Christ was the prime example of this all He had all authority and power as the Son of God yet He did not come to be waited upon but ministered, worked and cared, for others and to give His life as a ransom to redeem many souls.

#### **4. Two Blind Men 29 - 34.**

20.29. As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed them.

As they were leaving Jericho to continue their journey to Jerusalem a large crowd followed them.

20.30. Two blind men were sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!"

As they were leaving Jericho two men who were sitting by the side of the roadside begging heard that Jesus was coming that way so began shouting out to Him to have mercy upon them. They acknowledged that He was Lord, that is He had supreme authority and the promised Son of David the promised Messiah (Psalm 132: 11 - 12).

20.31. The crowd scolded them to get them to be quiet. But they shouted even more loudly, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

The crowds yelled at them to be quiet but they shouted all the louder.

20.32. Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Jesus on hearing them stopped and called out and asked what it was they wanted from Him.

20.33. They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened."

They had no doubt that Jesus was able to give them their sight. They in simple faith asked Him to.

20.34. Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Their faith was rewarded Jesus in compassion touched their eyes and immediately they received their sight and became His followers.

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