

The Bountifulness

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Matthew 20:1ff.

B. We struggle with the apparent unfairness of the landowner in this story because we identify instinctively with the workers who worked all day. In all reality, we are all the 11th hour workers in God's eyes but He is still generous with us. (Matthew 19:27-30)

II. We see the boundless generosity of the grace of God in this story.

A. God calls some early in life and some late in life, but rewards us all generously. (Deuteronomy 24:15)

B. The workers hired at the 11th hour received not what they earned, but what they needed. This is how God's grace operates- it is always sufficient for our needs and it is not contingent on our performance. (Romans 8:32; Jeremiah 32:38-41, 30; Malachi 3:8ff)

C. We must rely on Christ's merit to earn God's grace, not our own merit. (Romans 12)

III. We also see the sovereignty of God in this story- that is, His right to do as He sees fit in a given situation. (Matthew 19; Matthew 20:15)

A. We do not deserve anything from God; rather, anything we get from God is a gift. (Luke 7:4ff)

B. We cannot obligate God to bless us through obedience or sacrifice. (Luke 17:10; Job 41:7)

IV. Ultimately, it is better for us that the kingdom of God does not operate based on merit, but rather on God's grace.

Application questions:

1. The first workers hired may not have had an issue with their payment until they compared it to the payment of the last workers hired. How does comparing our performance as Christians with other Christians' performance keep us from enjoying God's grace?

2. Are there things in your life that you are sacrificing for God that you feel obligate Him to give you a specific reward? How can you wrestle with that expectation considering Jerry's point about God's sovereignty?

3. How have you experienced God's grace in a situation where you didn't deserve it? Take a moment to thank God for that grace.
