

Scriptural reference

Read the following passage together:

Matthew 20:1-16 (KJV) - laborers in the vineyard

Questions

1. Who do you think the householder represents in this passage?
2. Who do you think the laborers represent?
3. Is the householder fair?
4. If you were the first laborer would you be disappointed with your wage? If so, why?
5. Did the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th laborers get paid more than they deserved? Discuss with your group.
6. Discuss verse 16 together and what it means to you.
7. Do you feel injustice for the 1st laborers? Can you relate to them?
8. Do you think the 2nd, 3rd laborers etc. got more than they deserved?
9. Do you think the 1st laborers misjudged the householder and should have trusted him to pay them what he thought was right, before agreeing to set terms of payment that had no flexibility?

Life Application

This passage does not discuss salvation. It talks of three hired laborers who worked for God (the householder). These men were already positioned for service and waiting for work before the householder arrived. We do not work for salvation in any way and I don't believe this passage refers to it. These men were laborers and we do not labor for salvation. It is discussing the different kinds of people who are serving the living God and the attitude they bring in service.

The 1st laborers came to the householder with an agenda. They agreed to work for him for a set payment in advance. Presumably they negotiated before agreeing upon terms of payment. They not only limited God in his ability to remunerate them but their attitude was, "*if I do this for you, you must do this for me in return*". They had an expectation that limited God, they expected only x and God was trying to give them y in abundance. Could it be that God wanted to reward the 1st group more but they limited him with their expectations? They could have answered him like the other groups, "*whatsoever is right, that shall we receive*". God is an abundant and generous God and had the first group agreed on what was right instead of the set amount (a denarius) they might have received much more.

The remaining laborers however did not agree for a set wage in advance but trusted God to reward them accordingly as he was a generous and faithful boss. Their faith in God was rewarded as each of the remaining laborers got **much more** than they deserved. This shows Gods unending generosity. The final laborers got a full day's pay even though they worked for only one hour. This was grossly unfair to the 1st laborers but God was still fair as they agreed to the terms. **God is not unfair if he shows generosity to others**. He can do as he wills. He was not unfair.

What is Stewardship?

DHOP Study Guide

It should be noted that a denarius was a liberal wage for a day's work in those days, so the householder was already generous from the start.

V 16) **Many are not called to salvation, all are called to salvation. The ones who are chosen for greater works and greater rewards are those who don't come to God with a set agenda and trust him to reward them fairly and liberally.** The laborers who trusted God got so much more than they deserved!!! This should be our attitude, we trust him with our finances, lives, time etc., and he will reward us for our service to him.

The ones who trusted God also were rewarded first v 16. Those who have faith in him for rewards Heb 11:6, will be rewarded in abundance. Those who agreed upon simple payment, were rewarded last with their agreed amount.

We need to check our hearts today that we have the right attitude in service to god. Our expectation should be that he will take care of us as we serve him, his rewards will be generous and we should not negotiate terms before we embark upon service. If so our negotiated terms can limit his generosity towards us. If he comes knocking on your door today for service, we should answer, "yes sir!", knowing that he will take good care of us and our rewards for service will match his generous nature.