

## THE PROBLEM WITH GRACE

“ Peter said ‘Look, we have left everything to follow you. What then shall we have?’” (Matthew 19:27) What will be our reward for following you? What will be our reward for being the FIRST to follow you? We have given up more than others? And Peter was right, they had! Jesus responds, as He so often did, with a parable. (Matthew 20:1-16) It is a story about a vineyard owner that hires men to work for a day in his vineyard for the usual daily wage. He goes back at 9:00 am, noon, 3:00 pm, and 5:00 pm to hire more men for that day. At the end of the day, he pays everyone, beginning with the last hired. He pays everyone the full daily wage. The first hired, hearing that the even those that worked only one hour got paid the full daily wage, are upset when they are not paid more. They go grumbling to the vineyard owner. He responds “Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?” (Matthew 20:14-15)

Do we begrudge God His generosity? “It's just not fair!” we say. Why do we try to live a good life? The issue here is God's grace. God help us, ANY OF US, if we get what we deserve. But our God is a forgiving God. This is the story of Prodigal son. Most of us relate to brother, who did everything right yet got no party. He was jealous. But the Father asks him to come in and join the party. He tells his son that all that he has promised his son will be. Nothing has changed. He explains to him that he is just happy to have his son back home and wants to INCLUDE him ALSO. It is not a matter of fairness. As sinners, none of us want to be treated “fairly” by God.

God's message to us is that we will receive everything that God has promised us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ! We are so determined to make the worst of a good situation! God's love and compassion exceed our understanding of "Just" and "Fair." So God says "I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" Come to the Heavenly party. ALL are invited. See all your friends. Be surprised by some who are there.

Our God is a God of Love, not law. Our God does not want us stressed about our Salvation. He sent

Jesus Christ to show us just how much he loves us. He wants us to relax know that He loves us. But He also doesn't want us two worry about who else will be at the heavenly Banquet. BUT we should know that it WILL be BIG party

The vineyard workers told the owner "You have made them equal to us." THAT'S RIGHT! We are all sinners, redeemed by Christ. And God loves us ALL!

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