



SUNDAY CLASS

8/30/09

Matthew 20:1-16 (New International Version)

"We have four things in this chapter.

- I. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16.*
- II. A prediction of Christ's approaching sufferings, Matthew 20:17-19.*
- III. The petition of two of the disciples, by their mother, reprov'd, Matthew 20:20-28.*
- IV. The petition of the two blind men granted, and their eyes opened, Matthew 20:29-34."*

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 20:1-16 (New International Version)

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

¹"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard.²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.³"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.⁴He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.'⁵So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing.⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'⁷" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'⁸"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'⁹"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius.¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.¹²'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'¹³"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you.¹⁵Don't I have the right to

do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?¹⁶"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."



Matthew 20:1-7 (New International Version)

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

¹"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.



DO WE EVEN DESERVE SALVATION?

³"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'⁷" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

Matthew 13:24 (New International Version)

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Matthew 21:28 (New International Version)

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

Matthew 21:33 (New International Version)

The Parable of the Tenants

³³"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

Matthew 20:8-11 (New International Version)

⁸"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

⁹"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

Leviticus 19:13 (New International Version)

¹³ " 'Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. " 'Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight.

Deuteronomy 24:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵ Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

Matthew 20:12 (New International Version)

¹²'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

Jonah 4:8 (New International Version)

⁸ When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

Luke 12:55 (New International Version)

⁵⁵And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is.

James 1:11 (New International Version)

¹¹For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

Matthew 20:13-14 (New International Version)

¹³"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you.

Matthew 22:12 (New International Version)

¹²'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless.

Matthew 26:50 (New International Version)

⁵⁰Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."^[a]

Footnotes:

- a. [Matthew 26:50](#) Or "Friend, why have you come?"

Matthew 20:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'



WHO ARE YOU TO QUESTION THE MASTER?

Deuteronomy 15:9 (New International Version)

⁹ Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin.

Proverbs 23:6 (New International Version)

⁶ Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies;

Matthew 6:23 (New International Version)

²³But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Mark 7:22 (New International Version)

²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly

Matthew 20:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Matthew 20:16 (King James Version)

16So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Matthew 19:30 (New International Version)

30But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first

Mark 10:31 (New International Version)

31But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Luke 13:30 (New International Version)

30Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

DO YOU WANT TO BE FIRST NOW OR LATER"

"Nothing was more a mystery in the gospel dispensation than the rejection of the Jews and the calling in of the Gentiles; so the apostle speaks of it (Ephesians 3:3-6); that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs: nor was anything more provoking to the Jews than the intimation of it. Now this seems to be the principal scope of this parable, to show that the Jews should be first called into the vineyard, and many of them should come at the call; but, at length, the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and they should receive it, and be admitted to equal privileges and advantages with the Jews; should be fellow-citizens with the saints, which the Jews, even those of them that believed, would be very much disgusted at, but without reason."

Ephesians 3:3-6 (New International Version)

3that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

"But the parable may be applied more generally, and shows us,

1. That God is debtor to no man; a great truth, which the contents in our Bible give as the scope of this parable.

2. That many who begin last, and promise little in religion, sometimes, by the blessing of God, arrive at greater attainments in knowledge, grace, and usefulness, than others whose entrance was more early, and who promised fairer. John is swifter of foot, and comes first to the sepulcher: but Peter has more courage, and goes first into it. Thus many that are last shall be first. Some make it a caution to the disciples, who had boasted of their timely and zealous embracing of Christ; they had left all, to follow him; but let them look to it, that they keep up their zeal; let them press forward and persevere; else their good beginnings will avail them little; they that seemed to be first, would be last. Sometimes those that are converted later in their lives, outstrip those that are converted earlier. Paul was as one born out of due time, yet came not behind the chiefest of the apostles, and outdid those that were in Christ before him.

Something of affinity there is between this parable and that of the prodigal son, where he that returned from his wandering, was as dear to his father as he was, that never went astray; first and last alike.

3. That the recompence of reward will be given to the saints, not according to the time of their conversion, but according to the preparations for it by grace in this world; not according to the seniority (Genesis 43:33), but according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Christ had promised the apostles, who followed him in the regeneration, at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, great glory (Matthew 19:28); but he now tells them that those who are in like manner faithful to him, even in the latter end of the world, shall have the same reward, shall sit with Christ on his throne, as well as the apostles, Revelation 2:26-3:21. Sufferers for Christ in the latter days, shall have the same reward with the martyrs and confessors of the primitive times, though they are more celebrated; and faithful ministers now, the same with the first fathers."

[Genesis 43:33 \(New International Version\)](#)

³³ The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment.

[Matthew 19:28 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁸ Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

"Lastly, Here is the application of the parable (Matthew 20:16), in that observation which occasioned it (Matthew 19:30); So the first shall be last, and the last first. There were many that followed Christ now in the regeneration, when the gospel kingdom was first set up, and these Jewish converts seemed to have got the start of others; but Christ, to silence their boasting, here tells them,

Matthew 19:30 (New International Version)

³⁰*But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.*

Matthew 20:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶***"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."***

Matthew 20:16 (King James Version)

¹⁶***So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.***

1. That they might possibly be outstripped by their successors in profession, and, though they were before others in profession, might be found inferior to them in knowledge, grace, and holiness. The Gentile church, which was as yet unborn, the Gentile world, which as yet stood idle in the market-place, would produce greater numbers of eminent, useful Christians, than were found among the Jews. More and more excellent shall be the children of the desolate than those of the married wife, Isaiah 54:1. Who knows but that the church, in its old age, may be more fat and flourishing than ever, to show that the Lord is upright? Though primitive Christianity had more of the purity and power of that holy religion than is to be found in the degenerate age wherein we live, yet what laborers may be sent into the vineyard in the eleventh hour of the church's day, in the Philadelphian period, and what plentiful effusions of the Spirit may then be, above what has been yet, who can tell?

Isaiah 54:1 (New International Version)

The Future Glory of Zion

¹ *"Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD.*

2. That they had reason to fear, lest they themselves should be found hypocrites at last; for many are called but few chosen. This is applied to the Jews (Matthew 22:14); it was so then, it is too true still; many are called with a common call, that are not chosen with a saving choice. All that are chosen from eternity, are effectually called, in the fullness of time (Romans 8:30), so that in making our effectual calling sure we make sure our election (2 Peter 1:10); but it is not so as to the outward call; many are called, and yet refuse (Proverbs 1:24), nay, as they are called to God, so they go from him (Hosea 11:2,7), by which it appears that they were not chosen, for the election will obtain, Romans 11:7. Note, There are but few chosen Christians, in comparison with the many that are only called Christians; it therefore highly concerns us to build our hope for heaven upon the rock of an eternal choice, and not upon the sand of an external call; and we should fear lest we be found but seeming Christians, and so should really come short; nay, lest we be found blemished Christians, and so should seem to come short, Hebrews 4:1."