

Matthew 20

Vss. 1-16: If you look back at how chapter 19 ends, you'll notice here Jesus is continuing his instruction on heavenly rewards. And of course, as He often did, He uses a parable to explain things further. Even though we use the word "works" when speaking about the things Jesus leads us into, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard gives us the principle standard used by Jesus for giving service rewards. As we heard this morning, our committed and faithful service determines our rewards, not the amount of work we complete or the magnitude of the work.

Read verses 1-16.

Take notice of the similarity between the last verse of chapter 19 and verse 16 here. Jesus is placing an elevated level of importance for humility of service. I love this parable because it helps us better understand the truth concerning our work for the Kingdom. Our reality is this... We should embrace every portion of Kingdom work as unique for "me". God desires for you to work for the Kingdom, does He not? Yes, He does. But He is more concerned with how well we accept the work and then with how faithfully we strive towards completely that work. Perhaps God hasn't called you to do something deemed "great" in the eyes of man, but if you serve Him faithfully with whatever task He has assigned you, your attitude of service will stand great in His eyes.

Vss. 17-19: This may seem subtle but look at the physical (geographical) location for where they are located. This is the point in Matthew's Gospel it begins to ramp up. From this point forward, Matthew's tempo increases. Where is Jesus headed? To Golgotha, the hill of skulls. To the cross and to the tomb. Jesus is detailed with His fourth time of telling the disciples about His coming death and resurrection. For some reason, the disciples didn't comprehend what He was telling them. Let's say they did understand, perhaps they just didn't want to accept it and believe it. Let's not be too harsh on them, many of us would've reacted in a similar fashion.

Vss. 20-28: Ah, yes! A mother's love. Who were the sons of Zebedee? (James and John) Their mother simply wanted assurance that her little baby boys were in good standing with Jesus. Mom failed in understanding the moment and the situation, didn't she? It's important that we don't get bogged down with this mother and her antics, but instead focus on the message of Jesus' answer. Heaven is our ultimate reward. What we find when we get there, is up to how faithfully we serve while

we're here on earth. Let me ask you a serious question. What kind of heaven are you hoping for? What kind of heaven are you working towards? I think back to a significant truth from this morning's message. I want to manage the tasks rightly and faithfully I have down here so that when I get there, I'll receive the rewards of our faith. Make no mistake about it. Our salvation is free because of Christ, but as Paul states, we must "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)

Vss. 29-34: I love the interaction that takes place here. Look at how these two blind men address Jesus. They rightly address Him as Son of David and in doing so, boldly acknowledge His Kingship. Do you think Jesus knew what these men were going to ask? It was obvious, but none the less, Jesus allowed them to ask anyway. The lesson is, even though Jesus already knows, we must acknowledge what it is we are suffering from. When we come to Jesus, we need to be prepared to admit our need. There is nothing we can bring to God that meets His standards, but if we confess our sins to Jesus, because of His righteousness, God accepts us. What happened to these men? Jesus healed them on the spot. The KJV uses "compassion", but the ESV uses "pity". Why is this important? Their time as followers was short because Jesus was very soon entering Jerusalem on His way to the cross.