

The Workers in the Vineyard

What are the key lessons of this parable? This parable teaches us that God's ways are not man's ways; in the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Is 55:8-9)



In the Mt 20:1-16, the landowner represents God, the workers represent believers who come into the faith or enter into the service of God at different stages of life, and as interpreted by St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, the equal wages represent the gift of eternal life. What is peculiar about this parable is that the landowner

paid the workers who first came to the vineyard early in the morning around dawn, the same wage as all the other workers who came to the vineyard at different times later in the day. Some came at 9:00am, some came at noon, some came at 3:00pm, and even some came at 5:00pm, only one hour before the end of the workday. After the workers got their wages, the workers who came early in the morning and had worked all day grumbled because they felt that the landowner treated them unfairly – they reckon that since they worked more, then they should be paid more. According to human standards, that is the fair thing to do. But God's ways are not man's ways.

This parable was intended, not so much to depict how things will actually occur, but as a teaching on how we are to manage our expectations with regards to how God hands out grace. First of all, it is highly unlikely that the people who get to heaven will complain about other people who either came to the faith later in life or hadn't served as long or as hard as they did in their lifetime. Beholding the beatific vision in heaven is the ultimate bliss, and nobody complains in heaven. There is no resentment in heaven, and anyone who gets there will be welcomed with great rejoicing by the angels and saints (cf. Lk 15:7,10). What the parable teaches us is that even now while on earth, we should not envy the recipients of God's grace, no matter how unworthy we may think they are. It also teaches us that we should never expect that God owes us for whatever we may think we have done for Him. Whatever reward God may have in store for us, it will be in God's way and in God's time.

There is no points-based reward system in heaven. When Jesus instructed the crowds to build treasures in heaven (Mt 6:20), He meant that instead of building temporary wealth on earth, we should invest our time, money, and energy into spiritual treasures that last forever in heaven, where neither moth nor decay can destroy, nor can thieves break in and steal. There are many kinds of treasures that we can build up in heaven; the most basic ones are the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love. While these virtues are originally given to us as free gifts from God, they are meant to be actively practiced and built up over time.

Lately, I have been mulling over how it will be when I come face to face with Jesus in judgment. I have always thought that He would ask, "How did you love on earth?" I have always been a diligent worker all my life, but have I doing my work out of duty or out of love?

As I have learned, our duties in life count as being done out of love when our motivation shifts from fear of punishment or desire for reward to a genuine desire for the well-being of others. When love is the driving force, duty ceases to feel like an obligation and becomes a natural expression of personal care and connection. We see people as individuals, and not just a faceless beneficiary of our charity. This

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transformation from duty and obligation to loving action takes place through several changes in the way we think and do things: (1) Doing an action to benefit, comfort or support an individual, rather than just checking off an item in a to-do list. (2) Doing a task without complaining. This is a shift in attitude from “I have to do this” to “I want to do this for someone.” (3) Doing things with care and attention to detail. We don’t do things carelessly and sloppily when we do them out of love. (4) Being present and attentive to others while performing our work, rather than being distracted, distant or cold to others.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The OCIA Period of Inquiry is now open: If you know anyone who has an interest in becoming Catholic, please ask them to contact Fr. Bill at info@hnojatl.org.

We are offering Chinese language classes next year in the Spring. On Saturdays from 2-4pm, we have a class for children ages 5-6, another for children ages 8 and above. On Sundays from 1-3pm, we have a class for adults. Spring Semester begins on January 9 and 10, 2027. The 2027 Spring Schedule have been posted in our church website: hnojatl.org.

If you would like to practice conversing in the English language, come and join us at our new English classes after the 10:30am Mass! This Sunday, class will be held in the Choir Room.

The 2nd Floor of our Education Building is almost ready! We need to buy whiteboards, 50" TVs and other classroom equipment, a medium-size copier and printing supplies. Our initial budget is \$4,000. So far we have collected xxxxx. Please use the Religious Education envelopes for this special donation.

Today is potluck Sunday! This is a great activity for everyone to foster fellowship in our church community. Lunch begins after the 10:30am Mass. Please bring your favorite dish to share. If you are celebrating your birthday in the month of September, we have ordered a birthday cake for you.

Attention all Parish Council and Finance Council members, we will have a joint meeting today at 12:30pm in the Conference Room.

Prayer List: Bian Cheng Zhang, Susan Lee, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.
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Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		