

## “God’s Easily Overlooked Grace”

Message Notes, March 26, 2023

### Matthew 20:1-16

<sup>1</sup>“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. <sup>4</sup>He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ <sup>5</sup>So they went. “He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup>About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ <sup>7</sup>“‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

<sup>8</sup>“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.’ <sup>9</sup>“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup>So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup>When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup>‘These 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.’

<sup>13</sup>“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? <sup>14</sup>Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup>Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup>“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

#### 1. We tend to overlook God’s grace: when we compare ourselves to others

- Those who started working early in the morning could no longer appreciate receiving one denarii, because they compared themselves with others.
  - Similar stories are told in the parable of the prodigal son and the diligent son, and also in the incident of sisters Martha and Mary
- Depending on our standard of comparison, we may be an early morning person, or we maybe a five o’clock in the evening person.
- A common grace shared by all: the owner of the vineyard came to talk directly with the complainer.
  - The owner came to see each different group at different times
  - Whether the person starting working early in the morning or at five o’clock in the evening, God saw each worker as equally valuable.

#### 2. We tend to overlook God’s grace: when we struggle

##### Matthew 10:32-33

<sup>32</sup>“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

- Jesus challenges the ideal to which we should aspire. Peter’s response....

##### Matthew 26:73-75

<sup>73</sup>After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.” <sup>74</sup>Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup>Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

- After Peter denied knowing Christ, Jesus did not retaliate in kind, but rather prayed for him and encouraged him.

**Luke 22:31-34**

<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” <sup>33</sup> But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

**Hebrews 4:15**

<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

➤ Only Jesus could live up to God’s standards, but He has compassion on us, who cannot

- Paul acknowledges his own struggles, and he is grateful for Jesus’ intercession for him

**Romans 7:15, 19**

<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do...<sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

**Romans 8:33-34**

<sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

**Conclusion:**

- What can we do to devise ways to focus on God throughout the day?
- Have you ever felt depressed in the darkness of your own heart, and been unaware of Jesus’ presence with you, only to later realize that he had been with you, helping you all along?
- Does someone around you need intercessory prayer?