

Is God Unfair?

Scripture Reading — Matthew 20:1-16

Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last. — Matthew 20:15-16

Several years ago a member of our church was privileged to lead a young woman to faith in Christ. The young woman had a terminal illness, and shortly before she died, I stood with a few others in her hospital room, listening to her testimony. At her memorial service I mentioned how in her last few months she had turned her life over to the Lord. After the service someone told me that it just seemed too simple.

Like the workers in the vineyard, that person felt it was too easy and not fair. In the parable, the men who had worked hard all day were upset because those who had been hired in the last hour received the same wages as they did. They felt cheated. The person who came to talk to me felt the same way. It did not seem quite right that someone who turns to the Lord during the last few months of her life should be as acceptable to God as someone who has served the Lord for a lifetime.

Jesus' message in this parable is that in the kingdom of heaven it's not a matter of how hard we've worked or how long we've served the Lord. We don't earn our way into the kingdom; eternal life is a gift of God's grace, and he extends his grace to everyone who comes to him, no matter when.

Have you experienced that grace in your life?

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for your amazing grace, which you extend to all who call on you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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