

**Gospel of Matthew**

**Chapter 20:1-34**

**“A Servant’s Heart”**

**\*All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted\***

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid  
Matthew W. Thoms, Pastor/Teacher  
May 2017

**10:00 -10:05 Announcements & Prayer**

**10:06-10:26 Praise & Worship**

**10:27-11:15 Teaching**

**11:16-11:20 Praise & Worship**

**11:21 Dismiss or Other Function**

**Announcement:**

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**Teaching:** It’s been a while since we’ve looked at a parable but I for one ... love the parables.

It’s been said that “The parables are Jesus’ way of helping the simple minded understand”, and I “understand” that.

So, let’s jump in at ...

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**Verses 1-16:** Remember that what started this was Peter’s question in **19:27** when he asked the Lord what he and the other disciples would be rewarded with since they’d left everything to follow Him. So, this parable is part of the Lord’s answer to that question.

A couple of notes for reference sake:

- 1.** First ... a denarius was the daily wage of a Roman soldier ... roughly \$62 by today’s value.
- 2.** Second ... by the Jewish clock the first group of workers would have started about 6 in the morning, the second group at 9am, the third at noon, the fourth at 3pm and the last group about 5pm. The work day ended at sundown, which, on average would be about 6pm.

Now, there are several things that this parable illustrates:

- 1.** Beginning with a warning not to fall into the trap of Jealously and covetousness.

**Romans 9:20 ... who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like**

**this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?**

**Q. Who are we that we should say to God that He's being unfair when He distributes His riches as He pleases?** -- When we see a brother or sister being blessed (talents, spiritual gifts, health, resources, whatever...), we're to rejoice with them, not be jealous of them.

**2.** The second thing about this parable is that it takes place in a vineyard and focuses on the "vineyard laborers". It looks at those who occupy themselves getting dirty for the sake of the harvest.

Jesus said ...

**Matthew 9:37 ... "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."**

So, it's the Lord of the Harvest (just like this landowner) who chooses the laborers.

**Q. But having said that, did you notice that the Lord chose every single laborer who came looking for work?** – Even those who came at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour.

The take-home point being ... it's not too late!

**3.** But that doesn't negate the fact that the parable refers to us as laborers ... not loungers.

**Q. So it's a valid question ... are you laboring for the Lord? – That is ... are you bringing Him glory through your actions ... through the way you invest your time?** -- There's really no limit to the labor that can bring Him glory. Everything from sweeping the floor to praying for the lost. From changing diapers to hanging sheetrock. And everything in between. If He asks ... and you do ... then that's laboring for the Lord.

James said ...

**James 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?**

**Q. So what then ... are we saved by the work we do?** – Certainly not! The work we do is merely evidence that we are, in fact ... saved.

So, it's true that all true Christians labor for the Lord, but we can't necessarily say that everyone who labors for the Lord is a true Christian.

Jesus makes that point in ...

**Matthew 7:22 "Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" 23 "And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS."**

These people did all kinds of powerful works and claimed that they were doing them in the Lord's name. But Jesus says, "How interesting that you did all these great works in My name because I've never even met you before."

Salvation comes from a relationship of submission to Jesus Christ and the labors we offer are evidence of that relationship.

**4.** The fourth thing I see in this parable is that ... in this world, equity is expected ... in-fact, it's mandated by law. But God's grace has nothing to do with equity. It has nothing to do with fairness.

The workers who'd been out in the hot sun all day, understandably, felt they deserved more than those who'd worked for less than an hour.

Someone who serves diligently in the ministry their whole life might be tempted to feel they deserve more than someone who comes to the Lord on their deathbed. But the reality is that both of those people deserve the same ... eternal damnation.

So, I don't want what I deserve ... I want God's grace. I'm very thankful that God's payment system isn't based on fairness!

**5.** And lastly ... this parable provides a concise answer to the question of works for salvation in that ... it makes clear that God deals with us, not based on what we've done, but based on what He's done.

Because, not only did these men work for less than an hour, but they were completely dishonest as well. The landowner had already been to the marketplace four times and had hired everyone that was there. So apparently, these men slept in and then lied saying, "No, we've been standing here all day, but no one has been by to hire us."

They were lazy liars! – And yet, the Lord says I'll take em'!

He did the same for you ... He did the same for me!

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**Verses 17-19:** A clearly prophetic statement ... He was going to Jerusalem where He would be betrayed, condemned, mocked, scourged and ultimately crucified.

The same thing that He first told His disciples back in **chapter 16** and has repeated several times since. And yet ... the disciples never seem to really get it.

But it's not just His suffering and crucifixion that's highlighted here ... in addition, He reminds them that on the third day after His death ... He was coming back to life!

And He's done that virtually every time He's mentioned His upcoming death to the disciples. He would suffer ... He would die and then He would be resurrected. That's been His consistent and repeated message.

Which is noteworthy because Jesus is our example in everything ... including speech. Each time He speaks of His cross He also speaks of His resurrection.

**Q. How often do you speak of your cross, the cross you have to bear?** -- Make sure that when you do, you also mention the glory for which you bear that cross ... the resurrection that we have all been adopted into.

*True story ... In 1889 the Emperor of Ethiopia (Maladuke II), heard that in Europe and America, criminals were being executing with an efficient new device called an electric chair. He immediately ordered one for his own country and was very excited when it arrived until he realized that it required electricity which was not available in Ethiopia at the time. Undaunted he said, "If the electric chair can't be used for the execution of criminals, it can also be used for the execution of my commands." So, for the next 15 years Emperor Maladuke sat on an electric chair when he issued his proclamations.*

He turned an instrument of death into a throne ... and you know what ... that's exactly what Jesus did. The cross was an instrument of death, but Jesus turned it into a throne ... and just for Himself, but for us as well.

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**Verses 20-23:** Matthew Henry calls pride ... "The sinful ambition to outdo others". And this encounter certainly fulfills that definition.

He also said ... with regard to this passage ... "Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, than desire for greatness."

But as the text says ... "They really had no idea what they were actually asking for."

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**Verses 24-28:**

**1st Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time**

The Lord's warning as that whoever wishes to be great ... you shall become a servant ... therefore humble yourself and the Lord will exalt you at the proper time.

Whoever wishes to take first place shall become a slave to the humble ... therefore humble yourself and the Lord will exalt you at the proper time.

Some seriously stern warnings! As Christians we're not to seek exaltation and ... as we saw at the beginning of **this chapter** ... when our brothers and sisters are exalted, we're to rejoice with them, not grumble.

**These verses** give us a Christian standard. A standard that is diametrically opposed to the standard of this world.

To be first in the Kingdom of God, you must be willing to be last. To be prominent in God's kingdom ... seek servanthood. That's when God will lift you up.

A guy by the name of James Packer wrote a book called "Your Father Loves You", and in that book he made a very profound statement ... he said, "You can tell if you have a servant's attitude ... by the way you react when you're treated like a servant."

**Q. So ... how do you react when you're treated like a servant? When you're handed the broom or the trash ... do you feel "put-out", or do you accept it as the least you could do?**

**Q. How much of a servant's heart do you really have? How much of a servant's heart do I really have?**

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**Verses 29-34:** So, they've made their way from Perea ... across the Jordan River headed west and have just passed through Jericho on their way to Jerusalem when this event unfolds.

And remember ... Jesus knew He was on His way to the cross. He knew that in just days His earthly ministry, and indeed His very life ... would end. And yet here we find Him in **these verses** reaching out to minister to blind men.

It makes me stop and assess myself ...

**Q. Just how much does it take to hinder my ministry? How busy do I have to be before I stop reaching out to those who ask? How much stress and anxiety does it take before I'm more concerned about myself than I am about others?**

**Q. And what about you? When you've got a busy day going ... do you still respond to God's calls? -- When someone runs into your car and does a \$1,000 worth of damage ... do you fall outa the saddle or are you immediately ready for an assignment from the Lord?** – We all need to realize that the person who just ran into

your car may very well be your next assignment. So, we can't allow our own fussing to hinder our ability to hear God.

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Now this same account is covered in **Luke's gospel**, but there ... more detail is given to us. More detail to remind us just how blessed we are.

See ... it says there in **Luke 18:36** that "these blind men were sitting by the roadside when they heard the commotion of the crowd shuffling and asked what was going on. Someone answered them that Jesus was passing by ... so it was then that they began to cry out".

We have no way of knowing for sure how long they'd been sitting there ... how long they'd been waiting ...

**Q. But you know what?** – We don't have to wait for Jesus to pass by!

Remember how Jesus said to His disciples back in **John 16:7** ...

**... I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away ...**

Because He left His physical body behind, He's able to say to us in ...

**Matthew 18:20 ... where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.**

**Q. Got something you need to talk over with Him? Something that needs His attention? A need that you need Him to meet?** – Hey ... go ahead! No need to wait from Him to pass by ... He's already with you! So, cry out!

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**Conclusion:** So, these men ask Jesus to heal their eyes. To give them back their sight.

You know in the Garden of Eden man had perfect vision. It wasn't until Adam's rebellion that His vision became blurred and distorted.

Paul tells us ...

**Romans 5:12 .... just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned**

So, we ... just like these two blind men ... inherited Adam's faulty vision. And we know that's true because it says so in ...

**1st Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then [in Heaven] face to face ...**

In our fallen state it is our ability to see God that's most impacted by our faulty eyes.

**Q. Do you remember what happened to the Apostle Paul after His conversion?** After his encounter with the Lord on the road ... he traveled on to Damascus where he had a man named Ananias pray over him ...

**Acts 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized**

Paul's spiritual eyes were opened.

**Q. And did you notice what these two blind men did as soon as they regained their sight and could see Jesus clearly?** Verse 34 says, **"Immediately they followed Him"**.

Last week we looked at the story of the rich young ruler in **chapter 19**. A young man who had it all going for him. He had riches and power, but he came to Jesus and asked, **"What am I still missing"**.

What he was missing was Jesus! He had all the world in front of Him and the vision of that kept him from seeing Jesus.

Maybe you find yourself in that young man's position this morning. Not that any of us are rich young rulers, but we may find well find ourselves asking the same question he asked ... **"What am I still missing"**.

**Q. Are you missing salvation?**

**Q. Are you missing a tight walk with the Lord?**

**Q. Are you missing the humility that allows Him to exalt you?**

**Q. Are missing out on the blessing of making Him priority number one in your life?**

Well ... good news ... Jesus is a prayer away and He's literally perched on the very edge of His throne ... eager and waiting to hear from you!

So, like these blind men ... cry out! And then .... Cry out again! Because just like the vineyard laborers ... it's not too late!

**Invitation as the Spirit Leads:** Scharry, [\_\_\_\_\_] and I will be available in the back of the sanctuary and if you've never made a commitment to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior or need to recommit or just have questions about what was covered this morning ... please come and visit with one of us.

**Invite to fellowship:** Potluck