



Topic: Equality. Bible Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like...

Have you ever heard the last shall be first and the first shall be last? That doesn't seem fair. Surely those who arrive first should be first and those who work more should be paid more. This is justice, yet Jesus reveals God's justice through His eyes of love.

Turn with me to **Matthew 20:1-16**. Jesus is likening the kingdom of heaven to the goodness of the landowner. Telling a story that was set in a time when people would line up each morning in the hope they would be hired for a day's wage.

Let us **verse 1** *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard."*

The Landowner

We read the landowner went out, he actually went out searching instead of requiring people to stand in line. He went out to the place where people were standing.

This is like God Himself who in heaven went out of heaven, in Jesus, walked the earth as a man, searching for all who would come to Him, come and be part of His Kingdom here on earth.

So we learn God is searching.

Let us read **verse 2** *'Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.'*

The landowner made an agreement with the labourers and the labourers made an agreement with the landowner.

But remember Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner. So what do we learn about the landowner from this particular verse?

We learn the landowner is fair in His dealings. Therefore God is fair in His dealings as He gives everyone free choice.



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A choice to be part of His Kingdom on earth and be part of His rescue plan to gather together all things in Christ Jesus. In receiving Jesus we are agreeing with God to be part of His Kingdom. God Himself gives free choice.

The Kingdom of Inclusion

Let us read on in **verses 3-4** *'And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, "'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.'" So they went.'*

The landowner went out again. Already the landowner had his workers, yet he goes out again, searching. Searching for those who have been passed by. All those the world says, we have no need of you and consider of no value.

The landowner saw the need of others, the need to be included, the need to be part of His Kingdom and the need to be considered of value. He sees the outcaste and includes them. He sees the needs of others and provides for them.

We learn about the landowner is that He gives what is right.

So the Kingdom of Heaven is like this landowner.

Let us read on in **verse 5-7** *'Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'*

The landowner went out again and again, searching. The landowner found more who were left out, more who were idle, more that this world has passed by. He searched and found those who others thought were of no use and he gives them a place and an opportunity to contribute their labour to the vineyard.

We learn about the landowner that he searches for those who have been passed by and includes all who are willing. He gives everyone an opportunity to be part of his vineyard. We also see once again that the landowner will give what is just and right.



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God Himself searches for all who are willing. This world may have rejected us, but God never rejects us. Others may think we have no value but God considers all of great value and gives each an opportunity to be part of His Kingdom and mission.

Everyone who receives the King is a witness and a testimony of the goodness of God.

Let us read on in **verses 8-12** *"So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'*

We see the landowner makes everybody equal. The landowner raised up those who have been overlooked, outcaste and neglected to be of equal worth and of equal value to those who were first chosen, included and loved.

God Himself raises up all who are willing to be equal-equal. Boy girl equal-equal, man woman equal-equal, adult child equal-equal, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The landowner made everybody equal. Equal reward. Equal value.

The Kingdom of Equality

God Himself makes everybody equal. God gives equal reward and His name is Jesus!

Let us read on **verse 13-15** Let us see what is the landowner's response to the first group. *'But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'*



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The landowner gives what is agreed to, each one equal, each one has the same need. That is the goodness of the landowner. The landowner is good.

God Himself is good. God Himself created all things good. God Himself gives each one who chooses to receive all His goodness, making each one equal-equal. So the Kingdom of God is fair and just and is inclusive of all people, including the outcaste.

His Kingdom is one of compassion and God Himself gives us His eternal provision according to our needs. God gives what is right and searches for those who have been passed by, looking to the needs of others.

*The main point is the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven
makes everybody equal.*

Jesus who is the King of the Kingdom says, the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God is like this landowner. The Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God is within everyone who receives and believes in Jesus, as His Spirit is within.

As we surrender to the Father's will, each day He will change us more and more into the character and image of Jesus. This is the Kingdom of God reality now, in this world we live in, in this world damaged by evil.

Comparison Kills

Now it's interesting that not everyone responds to God's love, God's goodness, God's truth of equality and mercy the same.

As we see with the some of the labourers, the first group, compare and evaluate their own goodness to others and fail to understand God's goodness.

They received the same blessing, yet they missed appreciating the blessing from God because they compared themselves with others.



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In their eyes they had done what is right, they are good and see themselves deserving of more. In a spiritual sense maybe they prayed more, or read their Bible more, or done more good works in the community. Yet compared their work with that of others, thinking because of their own good works or their own goodness they were better than the others.

Jesus says in **Verse 16** *'So the last will be first, and the first will be last. For many are called, but few chosen.'*

The last that will be first are those who believe and receive Jesus as the anointed One, as their saviour, as God who became human, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and is now at the right hand of the Father.

Having received Jesus they live in the reality that Jesus the anointed One is coming back to restore all things, eradicate evil and give their eternal final inheritance of our resurrected bodies that never wear out, never die and never get sick.

Remembering that Jesus has already disarmed the powers, defeated evil, defeated its power and the strongholds, yet evil still exists.

Jesus has given us His power and authority over the evil powers to tear down strongholds that come against the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the Kingdom of God.

When all who will come to Him throughout the ages have been completed, when the gospel has been preached throughout all the world, and see the signs of the times that Jesus told us about, Jesus will return. As we look at what is happening in the world today, Jesus is coming soon!

The first shall indeed be last. The last shall indeed be first. The Kingdom of God make everyone equal-equal.

The Choice

In this situation of the text 'called' is everyone. All are invited. In fact, all are given opportunity to receive God's goodness and His Kingdom in Jesus Christ.



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Jesus' flesh and blood sacrifice, His free gift of Himself is for all who are willing to receive. God's heart is that everyone would come to Him and be saved. Yet God will not interfere with a person's free choice.

Everybody has free choice. Every group of workers had a free choice. They chose to be part of the labour and the vineyard.

That is the choice, to receive Jesus and His Kingdom or reject Jesus and His Kingdom.

Our journey through this life is temporary, yet the choice we make in who Jesus is determines our eternity.

When we have chosen Jesus we are delivered from eternal darkness and brought into the Kingdom of light.

Delivered from the lies of the evil one and brought into the fullness of all Truth.

Rescued from eternal death and brought into eternal fullness of life.

Free from this world of injustice and brought into God's Kingdom of equality.

No matter what blood, no matter what tribe, we are equal-equal in Christ Jesus.

Man and woman equal-equal, children adult equal-equal, leader follower equal-equal. This is the kingdom of God. Equal-equal.

Your Response

If you have never received Jesus as your Lord and saviour, now is the time. God is searching for all who are willing. If you are willing to receive Jesus as your Lord and saviour, simply open your heart and mind and say yes to Jesus, I'm willing. You don't know what tomorrow will bring. Jesus is reaching out to you right now and saying, 'come to me, come as you are, come and receive and enter in.' Just let Him into your heart and mind and life as your Lord and saviour right now.



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If you have received Jesus as your Lord and saviour yet you still compare yourself to others, now is the time for you to live in the reality of the freedom and victory of His Kingdom. Where you will see yourself and others through His eyes of love. Equal-equal.

Simply surrender that comparison, surrender all to Jesus. Be surrendered to His will just sitting in His presence, letting Him change you. As you see and feel and experience the Living God changing you more and more each day, being transformed into the image and character of Jesus you will no longer be comparing yourself with others. You will see how much He has given you.

We thank you Heavenly Father that you are searching and that you sent Jesus. As we receive Jesus we receive your Spirit, we receive your Kingdom. Thank you Father that as we surrender to you, by the power of the Holy Spirit you transform and change us to see others through your eyes of love, equal-equal. We thank you that you give us all an opportunity to be a witness, a true witness of the Living God, in this your mission to bring all things in one in Christ Jesus. For such is your Kingdom. We thank you in Jesus mighty name amen.