

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Jonah 3:10--4:11

Psalm 145:1-8

The Lord is slow to anger & abounding in steadfast love. (v8)

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty & eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, & train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Matthew 20:1-16

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, & I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon & about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o’clock he went out & found others standing around; & he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers & give them their pay, beginning with the last & then going to the first.’ ⁹When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, & you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day & the scorching heat.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’ ¹⁴Take what belongs to you & go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, & the first will be last.”

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. & 2. Consider the following possibilities & discuss the strengths & weaknesses of each. (1). The parable sketches an ideal economic picture in which everyone gets equal pay, in the spirit of Acts 2:44-45. (2). At the time Matthew wrote, Gentiles were overtaking Jews within the Christian community. Seen in that light, who are the Gentiles & who are the Jews in the parable? (3) Read Matthew 19:27-30. If Matthew intends the parable (recorded only in his Gospel) to be an expansion on this earlier thought, then who would be the “first” & the “last”? (4). Which of the above readings – Acts 2 or Matthew 19 -- best reflects the core theme of the Jonah story?*

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EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. We say we cherish God’s abundant grace, but what are times when we (even every so slightly) resent how God applies that grace? When were times that you expected more from God & received less. How did that affect your relationship with God?*
4. Review the 9th & 10th commandments in the [Small & Large Catechism](#) as well as the [SC](#) meal prayers How is coveting much deeper than wanting some consumer object at a store. [SC](#), [LC](#) available bookofconcord.org

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. Much of our media’s outrage & “whataboutism” is fueled by jealousy, envy, & coveting to make you whine “That’s not fair!” How does generosity for the sake of others help guard you against the outrage?
6. Seniority-based systems protect the longest participants (*vv10-12*) at the expense of the newest, until not enough new participants can be consumed for the sake of the system. Consider your congregation’s “actives” into 10+ years, 5-10 yrs., 2-5 yrs., & 1-2 yrs. What do you see? What can you do to change it?

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17th Sunday after Pentecost

09.24.23

Series: Subversive Verses

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Senioritis

God's people win & lose as team, no matter who signed up first or last

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: [The first workers] grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, & you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day & the scorching heat.' (*vv11b-12*)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,
striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,
(*Philippians 1:27a, c*)

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