

Rector's Message – Sunday, September 20, 2026

Same Bread. Same Wine. Same Full Day's Wage of God's Grace.

Text: Matthew 20:1-16.

To be honest, this parable might offend our sense of fairness, as we think of living in a gig economy where you are paid either by the hour, or by your productivity. The Church has often preached the same — be early, work harder, be honest and more transparent, be holy, be cautious, the list goes on... That's true, but Jesus says His Kingdom is being orchestrated by His own divine generosity.

At the Lord's Table every Sunday, we often practice Matthew 20:1-16 but we might not know. No one gets more Jesus because they came early. No one gets more Jesus because they have been around for a long time. As we all come to Christ in the longing and sometimes in the weariness of our souls, there is no first-class line. We all share the "*Same bread. Same wine. Same full day's wage of God's grace.*" God does not pay us according to how long we have done things in our own eyes or by our own efforts; He pays us according to the generosity of the **Cross** — and that is good news for the tired 6am workers and the weary 5pm workers alike. As we come to a place of worship, in our sacred space, to do what God has called us to do, it is important to put Matthew 20 into perspective. The person who was baptized 60 years ago at St. Bart's or St. Georges and the person who walked into the sanctuary on a Sunday morning for the first time we all received the same host, the same wage — **Christ Himself!** In a very polarized world where we live in an atmosphere of competitions/comparisons, we need to pay attention to what this passage is saying to us as Church. Jesus is not saying your work or whatever you do for Him doesn't matter. But He is saying: Don't let your stewardship curdle into entitlement. The denarius you receive is **ME: Christ** — and is always a gift, never a wage! Can you rejoice that others get the same gift?

Like I have said in the past in one of my messages, when someone always lives in the atmosphere of scarcity or entitlement, such would think that nothing would be enough for everyone and everything is for themselves alone. But when one lives in the atmosphere of abundance, they also think that there is always something for everyone to share and get along with - knowing that because of their faithful service it has allowed others to believe. The atmosphere we inhabit dictates who we are; afterall everyone is the product of their own environment. There are things we get naturally from our parents, something like our genetic code, the DNA, family attributes, etc. But the life that we live is a total reflection of our own atmosphere of where we grow or live. For example, If a woman gives birth to quintuplets (five children) all at the same time; identical quintuplets. Immediately after their birth, she takes one to Australia; takes another one to Africa; takes one to Europe; leaves one in North America and takes another to Asia. And they all grow in these different continents for 21 years and they meet again after all these years, you would not think they were born of the same parents. Why? The problem is not biological; the problem is not in their genetic code or in their DNA, the problem is the atmosphere they have all grown that has shaped their distinctive identities/personalities. It is the firmament they all have all inhabited that is responsible for the construction of their lives. So Church, Jesus is telling us today from this parable of the vineyard workers as we grow in faith and spend our time and resources for the things of the kingdom, the atmosphere we dwell would

determine and be responsible for who we are, and how we react to things. We should not see what we do for God as something by our own strength or by means of merits. Because the atmosphere is what produces our culture, our lifestyle, and our belief system. We don't climb to grace. The grace of God comes to us every time even when we don't deserve it; knowing that perhaps, by our character in service to God without any comparisons of the timing of others (about how long or how far) would allow those who see us as Christians would come to believe.

I get why we are surrounded by spiritualities that say the universe is run by our human dynamics of how we feel. That is, what you manifest, you get. If you are heavy, you sink. If you are light, you rise. Learn the laws, master the vibrations, and you will ascend. Great! It's attractive because it sounds fair and motivating. But this parable says: God doesn't run the world through the lens of our human trappings. He runs it by His own generosity and graciousness. And I also want us to notice what Jesus says here — the owner of the vineyard keeps **coming out** to find people who have not been hired. God is not waiting at the top of a ladder for us to come up to Him. He comes down to the street-corners where we stand at 5pm or even very late, feeling unhired, and He says, 'You also go into my vineyard to get something done.' We are all called for the same reason with the purpose of enriching His Kingdom at different times and opportunities.

The landowner goes out at 6am, 9am, noon, 3pm, and 5pm and pays everyone the same. For the 21st Century Global Church, this parable demolishes every merit-based or self-deserving spirituality to reflect on who God is and what His grace can do for us, and not for our personal-profit/glory but for the true meaning of what it means to be His follower. And again, this parable might offend our sense of fairness, as we think of living in a gig economy where you are paid by the hour, or by your productivity. The Church has often preached the same — be early, work harder, be more honest, be holy, be cautious, the list goes on... That's true, but Jesus says the Kingdom is run by His own divine generosity - Matt. 20. v.15 - "Is your eye evil because I am good?" The problem is not that the master is unjust, no! But the early workers are simply envious of the grace given to others. God has every right to give to anyone His gift of grace as He desires. The 21st century church battles comparisons — growing churches vs. dying churches, Global South vs. Global North. But God says: I will be generous to whoever I want. The last are first: The 5pm workers are the ones no one else hired — helpless on the streets, the precarious, the new immigrants trying to find their feet in a new country, the spiritually late to the table, those who we feel are insignificant, but are **hopeful; God starts with them**. No matter where we find ourselves, God meets us there and He does what He does because He is God, and there is no question about it. He does what He does to fulfil His purpose in each and everyone of us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

With every blessing,

The Reverend Wilson Akinwale
Rector