

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Winter Bible Studies

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Yahweh's Labourers

1. The Almighty's Vineyard

At a time when the majority of nations have huge unemployment problems, at a time when almost every club, church group and community has many unemployed members, we present this parable on **employment**. (read the whole parable)

Matthew 20: 1: *"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning **to hire labourers into his vineyard.***
2: *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.*
3: *And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,*
4: *And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.*
5: *Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.*
6: *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?*
7: *They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*
8: *So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.*
9: *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.*
10: *But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.*
11: *And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,*
12: *Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.*
13: *But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?*
14: *Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.*
15: *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*
16: *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."*

This parable is about:

- **Salvation** and the divine invitation to the **Kingdom of Heaven**. It is not about the **employment problems** of any particular nation.

- **The Employer: Jehovah (Yahweh)** the Almighty God of Israel.
- The Workers - True believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.
- **The amount of work** remaining to be done. This can be gauged by the fact that the divine Employer started seeking workers at 6 am to ensure that He would take on the keenest workers, who themselves would be up and looking for work at that early hour.
- **The Timescale:** Notice how the employer repeatedly visits the market-place through the day. Scarcely has He returned to the vineyard when He realises that **more workmen are needed**. He can see this at a glance. As He casts His eye over the workmen labouring in the field He can also see that they have no hope of bringing in the harvest without help. Either because they are too **few** for so great a harvest, or because they are too **slow in their work**. But whatever the reason He goes back to the market to look for more workers.
 He went out again at 9 am (third hour)
 He went out again at 12 am (sixth hour)
 He went out again at 3 pm (ninth hour)
 He went out again at 5 pm (eleventh hour)

2. The Eleventh-Hour Worker

Consider for a moment this worker's mentality. **Who knows, in real life you may be represented by him.**

- He undoubtedly is a **late starter**. We know this from the fact that he was not available all through the day, else he would have been employed by the Master earlier. So he is a *late starter*.
- He doesn't give up **looking for work** once he is made aware of the fact that an employer is out there repeatedly coming back to the market place looking for workers. Perhaps the news has finally gotten around to him: *"There is still work to be had, starting at any time!"* Go if you want a job.
- **He is an extremely good worker once he gets started.** It is doubtful if he would have been put first and paid so well if the Master didn't reckon he had done well: because the Master is no fool. He had agreed the first worker's wages. (verse 2) He also had a fixed policy to pay each man **"whatsoever is right."** (verse 4) So this man is getting a full day's wage because he worked well, albeit for only a short while.

3. The Wages

Matthew 20: 8: *"So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.
 9: And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.
 10: But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny."*

Ponder the scene at that amazing payout.

4. The Complaint

Matthew 20: 12: *"Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day."*

5. Was the Master being Unfair?

Verse: 11: The Master is called the **'goodman of the house.'**

Verse: 2: He made an agreement which he is keeping.

Verse: 4: He also made subsequent agreements with later workers to give them **'whatsoever was right.'** No doubt he is also keeping that agreement. He is paying out what is right.

Was the Master being unfair? I doubt it. He is in fact dealing out a generous wage: firstly because he is a generous

employer and secondly, because this end-time worker is extremely industrious. **He had accomplished in one hour what had taken others all day.**

6. The Last Day Believer

You and I have been called into the vineyard in the closing hours of earth's history - at the **eleventh hour**. This is that hour and you could be that **'eleventh-hour worker.'** Think about it! The day will soon be spent and Yahweh is still looking for workers in His vineyard. Are you available for work? And if so, what is your attitude towards Yahweh's work? The Saviour told another parable about work. Here it is:

Matthew 21: 28: *"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.*

29: He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30: And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

*31: Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, **That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.***

*32: For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: **but the publicans and the harlots believed him:** and ye, when ye had seen it, **repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.**"*

How do you measure up to this survey? **Which brother are you like?** You need to give that question serious thought!

7. Personal Vineyards/Vines

You and I are also likened to **'vines'** in Yahweh's vineyard: **'sheep'** in His flock: **'plants'** in his garden. How are you making out? Are you producing good fruit? Or are you lining up to be cut down?

- **Unproductive Vines**

Isaiah 5: 1: *"Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:*

*2: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and **he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.**"*

Proverbs 24: 30: *"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;*

31: And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down."

Matthew 7: 19: *"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."*

- **Productive Vines**

Proverbs 31: 15: *"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.*

16: She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17: She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms...

27: She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28: Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband (Messiah) also, and he praiseth her."

Note: Here is a picture of the industrious believer, not just of the perfect wife.

8. Questions we all Must Answer

Mark 12: 1: *“And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.*

2: And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3: And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4: And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5: And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6: Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7: But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8: And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

*9: What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? **he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.”***

9. Challenging Questions for Brave Hearts

- Have I recognized the fact that not only is there work in Yahweh's vineyard, but that I myself am a vine in the vineyard of the Most High?
- Am I neglecting my responsibilities? Have I started work yet? Or am I still sleeping?
- What kind of a worker am I when I eventually get started? Even after working all day has the person who started 11 hours later caught up with my performance?
- What kind of fruit am I producing - good or bad, sour grapes or sweet? Or maybe no grapes at all?
- Do I give the fruit back to God, or do I reject His every attempt to get His share of the harvest?

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

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