



God's Not Fair

(1st in a series of on series on the Letter to the Philippians)

Philippians 1:21-30 and Matthew 20:1-16

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First Federated Church, Peoria, Illinois

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(Sermon Notes)

As you read the Gospel Lesson I want you to ask yourself three questions:

What does the parable tell me about God?

What does it tell me about myself?

What does it tell me about what God want the church to do or be?

What does the parable tell us about God?

The story of John Hanna

Boy Scout camp

Polio

Iron lung

Career in banking

Post polio

Never bitter

But where was the fairness

Where is the fairness in me being born ...

...

Life is unfair.

The bible does not talk about "fairness"

It speaks of Faithfulness

God's faithfulness

Our call to faithfulness to God.

Faithfulness is not a set of intellectual beliefs but a way of living life to God's glory.

What does the parable tell me about me?

Who did you identify with the most?

The ones that worked all day,
the ones that worked only a part of the day,
or the ones who worked only an hour?

I believe that this parable is a kind of spiritual litmus test.

Last week we looked at the difference between "self-righteousness" and "righteousness".

The self-righteous tear other down in the hope of feeling better about themselves.

Largely bitter people.

They are "holier than thou"

The righteous build others up.

They see the reflection of God in the other person.

The more that we identify with the workers who labored all day rather than the workers who labored only an hour and received a day's pay, the more we fall in the self-righteous end of the scale.

Because, you see, the parable is "good news" or "Gospel" only to those who see themselves as recipients of God's unmerited AND unearned GRACE.

Your salvation, Paul wrote to the Philippians, is God's doing.

Did you hear that?

It is God's doing, not yours.

It's not about you, or about what you did or did not do.

It's about God.

For God has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ,
but of suffer for him. (v. 29)

Now most of us do not see suffering for our faith as a privilege, but Paul did.
He knew that taking Jesus seriously was not easy.

It was hard, the hardest thing that we can do because everything Jesus taught
is counterintuitive.

It goes against our nature.

And finally, what does the parable tell us about what we as a church and as
individuals are called to do?

What are we supposed to do?

In the parable the LANDOWNER went out to find laborers to work in his vineyard.
He even went out at the end of the day!

It is interesting to note that Jesus didn't set at the corner of Main and First in old
Jerusalem that tell people that if they wanted to learn about God to come by at 10
am.

No, he went to where the people were

and he told stories,

and he healed the sick.

He was a missionary

and he told his disciples—those who would take him seriously—

to go and do likewise.

Earlier we prayed with the children,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

At the end of the day,

the landowner was GENEROUS!

Disciples of Jesus Christ are generous because they know that in their daily life that they are on a mission to be the best stewards that they can possibly be with the things that God has entrusted to their temporary care.

We are to do the most good that we can do, to the glory of God.

As someone said in a recent bible study,

“To each according to their need;

from each according to their ability.”

Live your life, Paul said to the Philippians, in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. (v. 27)

We are the body of Christ on earth.

Are we living as the body of Christ on earth?

Amen.