

Sermon title: Gracious Compensation

Text: Matthew 20:1-16

Setting: Jesus is teaching his disciples about the up side down Kingdom of Heaven through parables. The text is bracketed with *“But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”* (19:30). *“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”* (20:16)

This parable is a warning against spiritual pride and spiritual ambition; redirecting it to *grace* and a *commitment to service*. God does not deal with us according to our work, or our deserving, but according to *grace*.

The last become first out of *grace*, (not works), and the first because *last* out of hubris, pride. We must be on guard! (Dale Bruner)

Introduction: Have you every grumbled and said, “Hey, that’s not fair, God”? Or, “I’m doing it right, everything I can -- what’s in it for me”? “It looks like I will never be able to measure up to that expectation”! The disciples asked the same questions of Jesus!

- I. We are called to be Christ’s disciples and a part of Christ’s ministry. This is what it means to be the Church as workers in the world, God’s vineyard. Matt 9:35-38; Matt 28:16-20.

- II. We have a God who is generous and gives us His good gifts.
Prov 11:25; 22:9. Ps. 34:8-14; 84:10-12; 103:1-5; 145:8-13; I Peter 2:1-3.

- III. We have a God who is full of grace and truth and extends his favor to all. Grace triumphs over our good deeds. (Our good deeds matter to God, they don’t save us).John 1:1-16; Eph 2:8-10

- IV. We have a God who asks us to turn our grumbling into gratitude and celebrate all who serve Christ. We don’t compete and we don’t compare. John 6:43; I Peter 4:9; James 5:9; Phil 2:1-18. John 21:15-22

Application: Everything we do, all our good works is the result of God’s grace. We surrender our pride, our ambition to God, and humbly serve where Christ plants us. May we hear our Lord saying to us, *“Follow me”!*