

Parables: The Greatest Stories Ever Told

October 16, 2011

Dr. Joe Scruggs, Senior Pastor

Parables:

- are everyday illustrations of truths about the Kingdom of God and the character of God.
- are generally spoken in the language of the common people.
- are not always easy, comfortable or comforting.
- frequently teach unexpected lessons.
- are generally designed to make one primary point and not allegories.
- need to be understood as Jesus' listeners would have understood them.

Matthew 20:1-16

Reality # 1 - God's Sovereignty *This is His world. He owns the field. He does the hiring. He sets the terms. He is not indebted to us. He doesn't owe us* _____

Don't mistake gifts for rights. It's easy to lose perspective when . . .

- I serve for the wrong reasons.
- I think things are unfair.
- I'm disillusioned or disheartened.
- I forget that God wants the "unwanted".

Maybe life's pretty good for you right now. God has given you this good stuff so that you can show the world a person who enjoys blessings, but who is still totally obsessed with God. Or maybe life is tough right now, and everything feels like a struggle. God has allowed hard things in your life so you can show the world that your God is great and that knowing Him brings peace and joy, even when life is hard. It is easy to become disillusioned with the circumstances of our lives compared to others'. But in the presence of God, He gives us a deeper peace and joy that transcends it all. To be brutally honest, it doesn't really matter what place you find yourself in right now. Your part is to bring Him glory – whether eating a sandwich on a lunch break, drinking coffee at 122:04 .m. so you can say away to study, or watching your four-month-old take a nap. The point of your life is to point to Him. Whatever you are doing, God wants to be glorified, because this whole thing is His – it is His movie, His world, His gift. Francis Chan

Reality #2 - God's Grace

- All the jobs came from the owner – he didn't have to hire anyone.
- Grace is not fair. (Ephesians 2:6-9)
- The goodness of the owner was lost in the discontent generated by envy and entitlement.
- A good arrangement in the morning seemed unfair later as payment was received at the end of the day.

Eleventh Hour Reminders

- *God is sovereign.*
- *God invites everyone and there's room for everyone.*
- *It's never too late.*

Talk it over . . . with your friends, family, or Growth Group.

Talking through the ideas presented in Sunday's message helps us apply God's word to our individual lives. Read over this parable several times to see what God shows you. Also, read over the quote below and briefly describe how it impacts you.

God's grace, in short, is not the sort of thing you can bargain with or try to store up. It isn't the sort of thing that one person can have a lot of and someone else only a little. The point of the story is that what people get from having served God and His kingdom is not, actually, a 'wage' at all. It's not, strictly, a reward for work done. God doesn't make contracts with us, as if we could bargain or negotiate for a better deal. He makes **covenants**, in which He promises us everything and asks of us everything in return. When He keeps his promises, He is not rewarding us for effort, but doing what comes naturally to His over flowingly generous nature. There is always a danger that we get cross with God over this. People who work in church circles can easily assume that they are the special ones. God's inner circle. In reality, God is out in the marketplace, looking for the people everybody else tried to ignore, welcoming them on the same terms, surprising them (and everybody else) with His generous grace. The earliest church clearly needed to learn that lesson. Is there anywhere in today's church that doesn't need to be reminded of it as well? Tom Wright

Parables

the greatest stories ever told

