



By Grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;  
My soul, believe and doubt it not.  
Why stagger at this word of promise?  
Hath Scripture ever falsehood taught?  
No! Then This word must true remain:  
By grace you to will life obtain. LSB 566 v. 1

This familiar hymn is based on **Ephesians 2:8-9**, **Titus 3:4-7**, **Isaiah 64:6** and **Romans 3:23-34** teaches the beautiful nature of God's grace! GRACE is God's Riches At Christ's Expense! Please read **St. Matthew 20:1-16**. This is the parable of the labors in the vineyard. The master went to hire laborers for a denarius (a day's wage) early in the morning. Later, he went and found other laborers standing idle and he hired them also. Going out three more times, he found others standing around much later in the day and hired them. When evening came, he told his foreman to call the laborers and pay them beginning with the ones who were hired much later in the day. Then he would work up to those hired early in the day. The ones hired late in the day received a denarius. When the laborers hired early in the day came, they assumed they would be given more since they were hired earlier. But each of them received the same amount, which they had agreed to when hired. After receiving the wage, they grumbled against the master and complained. But the master replied that he did them no wrong, for they agreed to work for a denarius. Verse 14 continues **"Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last."**

Is this parable about fair wages? Certainly not. Is it about the relationship between employer and employee? No, it is not. Is it about treating others with respect? That's not the heart of this parable either. Can we apply our own ideas of "justice" and "equality" on God's Word? What happens when we put our own interpretation on God's Word? Do we complain about what God does or does not do for us? How do we look at this parable; what do we learn from it? Is it possible for us to put our own view and desire on God's Word?

While this parable might contradict what we believe is "fair" in today's world; we must understand that Jesus is not giving us a lesson in employer/employee relationships. The parables are teachings about the kingdom of heaven, as such, they are focused on our spiritual welfare because God's desire is salvation in Christ; **1 Timothy 2:3-4**.

What is the central teaching of this parable? What if Jesus had taught those who came later earned less pay? How would that work after realizing this parable is about going to heaven? Is it possible for a person to earn salvation by his or her good works? Read **Romans 1:16**; **Ephesians 2:8-9**, which teach the power of the Gospel, brings salvation by the grace of God which gives the gift of faith and that faith believes the promises of God in Christ. God's free gift is faith which believes what God gives in Christ's death and resurrection; the forgiveness of sins and where there is forgiveness there is life and salvation. **Romans 6:23** teaches **"the wages of sin is death,"** that's God's Law; **"but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"**; that is the Gospel, the good news of forgiveness in Christ.

The parable Jesus uses in **St. Matthew 20:1-16** is most definitely not about wages and relationships between employers and employees. It is about God's love in Christ, **St. John 3:16**, about the fact **"God is love"** **1 John 4:8** and bestows His grace according to His generosity and mercy as taught in the parable by Jesus.

Is our salvation an unmerited gift of God's Divine grace? Yes, absolutely! This is the very heart of what Jesus teaches in this parable. God saves by GRACE in Christ Jesus! Through Jesus, we have a special relationship with God which means we should not question Him or grumble, as in the parable, about how life is going but give praise to God in all circumstances (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**) for His mercy and His will for us given through Christ our Savior!

**Psalm 46:10a** teaches us to **"Be still and know that I am God."** **God is our Savior in Christ Jesus our Lord! God's gift to us is His GRACE in the work of salvation accomplished by the death and**

**resurrection of Jesus! As the ones who receive the blessings of the cross and who are the ones who receive God's GRACE in and through Christ we can joyfully sing.**

By grace! This ground of faith is certain;  
As long as God is true, it stands.  
What saints have penned by inspiration,  
What in His Word our God commands,  
Our faith in what our God has done  
Depends on grace-grace through His Son.

LSB 566 v. 4

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt

