

Service, or Serve Us

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-5 Larry - GFE. Lost & Found. Camp. Christmas Services.
- B. Slide6 Justice Matters - not till last Sun in Jan...but looking for those interested in helping/serving at the conf. *Sign up in info booth today.*
- C. Slide7 2 Wed Nights during 2 week stage construction. Starting Mon 12/26. So 12/28 & 1/4
 - 1. 12/28 adults are invited to join HS in capture the flag (3rd grade & up). Details to follow. Others encouraged to have a few families over for fellowship night.
 - 2. 1/4 Will be a Movie Night down the street to watch Sing. [Tori Kelly is the voice for Meena, a teen elephant w/severe stage fright] Details to follow.

II. Slide8 Intro: Service, or Serve Us

- A. Let's read the bracketed *role-reversal statements* in 19:30 and 20:16.
 - 1. The parable of the vineyard workers portrays *God's gracious generosity.*
- B. Read the whole Parable. [Landowner = The Father. Hired Laborers = His Servants]
- C. Slide9 Video: *Capuchin Monkey Video: social inequality.* [Frans de Waals, *Primatologist/Ethologist*, TED talk]
 - 1. Fairness. Equality.
- D. Slide10a This parable has nothing to do with...
 - 1. Salvation - nobody works for salvation. And nobody is going to complain about their own salvation or someone else's.
 - 2. Slide10b Rewards - rewards are granted on the basis of faithfulness and service, and each man's reward is different.
 - 3. Slide11 This parable has everything to do w/a wrong attitude in Service.
 - a) We'll find the Kingdom of God is all of Grace & so is the service connected w/it.
- E. Slide12 This parable is built on Peter's question in 19:27 *Therefore what shall we have?*
 - 1. It was a logical question. And the Lord's answer was encouraging (explaining 100% return on his investments). But Jesus detected in Peters question an attitude of heart that was dangerous.
 - a) Was Peter serving the Lord only for what he could get out of it?

b) **Were** the disciples forsaking all *only* because He had promised them a reward?

(1) So Jesus gives this parable with *several warnings* that relate to our Christian Service.

III. Slide13 **HIRING** (1-7)

A. In first-century Palestine, a landowner typically woke early in the morning and went to the marketplace, where day laborers gathered. He would select a few workers to tend his fields or harvest his crops and pay them their wage at the end of the day. In the parable, the owner returns to the marketplace every few hours to hire more workers.

B. **Early in the Morning** - Early dawn, the break of day, it was a country fashion for starting work (RWP). 6am

1. Whether the grapes were ripe **or** it was pruning season, it appears to have been **urgent**. **And**, It was a choice privilege to be allowed to begin *holy service* so early in the morning.

C. **Denarius** - A Roman silver coin, worth a laborers days wage. (size/dime)

D. **Note**: The 1st were under **contract**, the others **not**. The Hiring x's were [6am, 9am, noon 3pm, 5pm]

E. **Slide14** Our **1st Warning** is...

F. **Beware of Making Bargains with God** (2)

1. **So**, there were actually 2 categories of workers: those who demanded a contract **&** those who had or needed no contract.

a) The 2nd group we commend for sticking it out all day not getting discouraged that nobody hired them. They trusted the owner to give them what was right.

So, they trusted the owners word **&** character.

b) This explains why the owner paid the men in **reverse order**, starting with the last workers that were hired. He wanted the 6 o'clock workers to see how generous he was to the employees who did not have/need a contract.

2. **So**, how did this apply to Peter? He wanted to know *what he was going to get*. Peter was signing a contract with the Lord. **So** Jesus was saying, **beware Peter, because you will get just what you bargain for**. Why not trust Me to give you what is right? God is just **&** generous.

- a) If we write the contract and tell God what we want, *we will always be losers*.
- b) **But** if we let him do it His way, we will receive *exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*. Eph.3:20
- c) **Slide15** Our Master in heaven does not limit himself to what is **just** and **equal**, He gives what is **gracious** and **generous**.
- d) Also, remember, God is more interested in her *heart attitudes* than in our work.
 - (1) If our hearts are **right**, our work will be right, **but** if our hearts are **selfish** and **grasping**, our what work will suffer.

IV. **Slide16 PAYROLL (8-12)**

- A. (8) According to the law, hired workers had to be paid at the end of the day (see Lev 19:13).
 - 1. Deut 24:15 *Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.*
 - 2. As the sun was setting in the west, the hour to pay the workers had arrived. [The one's who were hired **1st**, were paid **last**]
- B. (9) **The eleventh hour**, just enough time to put all the tools away.
 - 1. **Slide17** *Our Lord's pay is not a **hire** of deservings, but a **gift** of bounty.*
 - 2. He payed on the scale of **Grace**, **not** on the rate of *Merit*.
- C. (10) These guys got 1 denari...we ought to get 12.
 - 1. **They supposed that they would receive more** - as far as standard economics, they are right. On the basis of hours of service rendered, they went far beyond the others.
- D. (11,12) **Borne the burden & heat of the day** - These sweat-stained men who had stood the scirocco...the hot, dry, dust-laden east wind, **that** blasted the corn in Pharaohs dream; **that** withered Jonah's gourd; **that** blighted the vine in Ezekiel's parable. **These men borne the burden & heat of the day.**
 - 1. These murmurers were actually biting the hand that fed them.
 - 2. **His only fault?** that He was **too good** to the short-timers.

E. Slide18a Our **2nd Warning** is...F. **Beware of Watching Other Workers** (12)

1. Don't watch other servants & measure yourself by them.
 - a) Slide18b We see the worker & the work. God sees the heart.
2. The disciples were often guilty of watching other people and drawing the wrong conclusions from it.
 - a) Remember when they saw the man *cast out demons in Jesus name*, but since the man did not belong to *their group*, they rebuked him. Jesus said, *Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.*
 - b) Just earlier in that same chapter the disciples were *unable* to cast out a demon themselves, and yet they dared to *criticize* a believer who was *able* to do it?
 - c) We too often attack those whose *success* exposes our own failures.

G. Slide19a Our **3rd Warning** is...H. **Beware of Overconfidence** (10)

1. They suppose that they would receive more. These workers were overconfident and ended up being disappointed.
2. We must never trust our own *shortsighted observations*.
3. These laborers *negotiated their own contract* but they didn't want to stick to it.
4. Slide19b 1 Cor.4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*
5. As God's workers, we must watch our motives and be sure we are serving God because of *our love for him*, and not because of a *promised reward*.
6. It is possible to accomplish *God's work* and yet not really do *God's will*.
 - a) These workers criticize the owner for being cheap. Like the prodigals elder brother, they *dutifully* did their job, but their *hearts* were not in it.
 - b) *Jonah* did the same when he finally obeyed God and went to Nineveh, but his heart was not in his ministry.

V. Slide20 **DISCRIMINATION (13-16)**

- A. There is so many *discrimination* laws today it's incredible. [some really important, some?]
1. Of course we should not discriminate based on: sex, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, gender, religion, political persuasion, etc. [at CM we have about 150 on staff school/church]
 - a) But difficult when you want to *bless* an employee (not employed here - *benevolence*).
Then we remind ourselves, are we setting a precedence? Fair?
 2. Slide21a *God is fair to all, more generous to some.*
- B. (14) **Take what is yours & go your way** - or *pick up*, as if he had saucily refused to take it from the table, or had contemptuously thrown the denarius on the ground (RWP).
- C. (15) **Is your eye evil because I am good?** - Mt.6:22 *The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.* [evil eye/good eye]
1. **Envy is ever spoken of as finding its expression in the eye:**
 - a) 1 Sam.18:9 *So Saul eyed David from that day forward.*
 2. Slide21b **Must you be Jealous because I am Generous?**
- D. Slide22 (16) Many interpret this as *many are called to laborer for the Lord, but few are choice servants.*
1. Jesus tells us that, *while many are called to service, few reach the standard of choice individuals.*
- E. Here's a great *plaque* to hang where you work (Over your washer/dryer. Above your changing table. On your desk. On your tool box. Or, on your wall at work) ...
Slide23 *I work here because this is where God has called me to do His work in the world.*
- F. There was a survey that listed 5 factors used to determine the desirability of a job:
[1] High income [2] No danger of being fired [3] Short working hours, lots of free time [4] Chance for advancement [5] Good fringe benefits.
1. What would you **add** to this list? **Which** is more important to you?
Is there something **not** on this list? (ie. the privilege of service, or the feeling of accomplishment that work brings)

- G. **Slide24** A man walked by a building project & asked 3 men what they were doing. **One** said, *I'm laying bricks*. **The 2nd** said, *I am making \$200 a day*. **The 3rd** said, *I am helping to build a Cathedral where people can Worship God*.

1. How do you view **your** work?

- H. **Note**: these 3 warnings include 3 different relationships.

1. **With God** - beware of making bargains with God.
2. **With our fellow workers** - beware of watching other workers.
3. **With ourselves** - beware of overconfidence.

- I. Again let's remember how Peter learned from this. We note his change in Acts 3:6 not asking anymore *what he will get* but asking *what can I give*.

- J. **Slide25 Questions to Ponder**:

1. Are you **available** to serve the Lord?
2. Are you willing to serve **without contract**?
3. If nobody has **hired** you yet, are you willing to **volunteer**?
4. Are you a **people watcher**?
5. How did you react to **the way** the Master **paid** the salaries? Did you think his system was **unfair**?
6. Do ever ever examine your own **motives** as you serve the Lord?
7. Do you **trust** God's word and really believe that He is **generous**? **or** are you **bitter** because *somebody else* got what you may think is a **better deal**?