

All Are Welcome  
April 13, 2025  
Pastor Jim Danielson

## Opening Illustration

What Carson taught me.

## Introduction

Like Carson, each of us has a purpose in our work, or if retired still has a purpose to live for. We are all workers in the kingdom of God. In the parable of the workers, Jesus reveals three principles of His kingdom.

## Three Key Principles of the Kingdom of God

### 1. God initiates the invitation to His kingdom.

*“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who **went out early in the morning** to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> “About nine in the morning **he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace** doing nothing. <sup>4</sup> He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ <sup>5</sup> So they went. “**He went out again about noon and about three** in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup> About five in the afternoon **he went out and found still others** standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ <sup>7</sup> “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’” Matthew 20:1-7*

The picture of a landowner searching for workers is a picture of God going out looking for men and woman to come into His kingdom. God always takes the initiative in searching us out.

*“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. John 6:42*

Throughout the day the owner kept finding people idle. The word idle doesn't mean lazy. It means that they weren't working and in need of a job. Once he found them, he offered them work and each time they accepted his offer. God has been reaching out to us for two millennia. He continues to reach out in hopes that we will accept His offer of salvation and come into His kingdom. He is persistent with His offer of grace and mercy.

God's invitation is for everyone regardless of their social status and He shows no favoritism in His outreach. While Jesus walked on the earth, He purposely reached out to the tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners because they mattered to Him.

*Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”*

*Luke 15:1-2*

### **Illustration**

An unusual banquet.

## 2. Our response shows our true spirit.

*“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’<sup>9</sup> “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius.<sup>10</sup> So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.<sup>11</sup> When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.<sup>12</sup> ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ Matthew 20:8-12*

When those hired first agreed to work in his vineyard, they bargained for their wages. Those who came later, came with only his promise that he would treat them right when he paid them. Each of these responses exposes the spirit in our hearts.

The first response was a self-serving spirit that wanted to know what their wages would be before they would work.

From a spiritual perspective, this attitude is deadly to the follower of Christ because it wants to know what’s in it for me before trusting the Lord.

It’s the same spirit Peter displayed after the rich young ruler spoke to Jesus and went away sad because Jesus told him to get rid of his money and follow Him.

Peter reminded Jesus that they had given up everything to follow him. Then he asked...What's in it for us? The spirit which those words revealed was not a good spirit.

The Lord answered Peter tenderly.

*“Truly I tell you...when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. Matthew 19:28-29*

### **Illustration**

Jim Haynes invited the world over for dinner.

### **3. God's grace is the true measure of His love.**

*“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup> Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup> “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” Matthew 20:13-16*

From beginning to end, the parable pictures God's limitless love and grace, which is unmerited favor. The men's work had no relationship to what they were paid, and our righteousness has no relationship to the grace we receive in Jesus Christ.

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23*

God's grace is the great equalizer that removes sin and makes every believer acceptable to Him in Christ.

*...all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:24*

The landowner told the unhappy workers that he wasn't being unfair with them. The problem wasn't the injustice of the owner but the jealousy of the workers. They assumed they'd get more because they worked much longer than those hired last. Selfishness sees what it wants to see. To them, it was "unfair" that they didn't get more than they had earlier bargained for.

God's principle for salvation is that everyone who comes in faith to His Son, receives the same gracious salvation. There are no exceptions or variations. Whether a person comes to God as a small child, or on their deathbed, all come into the kingdom on the same basis and receive the same eternal blessings.

The thief on the cross is a wonderful picture of saving faith even at the last possible moment of life.

*Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42-43*

God is not unfair with us. Every one of us deserves hell because of our sins, but God freely offers us salvation.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

The landowner's words to the ungrateful men are a beautiful reminder of God's compassionate Character and nature.

*I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup> Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?*

*Matthew 20:14-15*

### **Closing Illustration**

John Newton's epitaph.