

A days wage
Mathew 20:1-16
September 24, 2023

How many of you thought back to your first remembrance of this text? Did you, like those first two think it was a little unfair? Have you ever had one of those jobs where you spent the day in the hot sun, wondering how hot hell was? Yes, if the situation that day was that at the end of the day, the guy that hired me would have given the same wage to the kid that showed up an hour or so before it was time to quit, I might have thought like those laborers hired in the text for today.

I have some videos that go along with the small catechism. Maybe I should say they WENT along with them as VHS tapes get old and don't work after awhile. I used them as they gave a face to what was learned in confirmation classes.

The episode that went along with this text of being content with what you have used this text. In the video, a car wash owner was needing some help to work the car wash. He advertised and got a couple of young guys came in and he hired them. I don't remember if it was a new business but as the two young guys got into the day, they needed more help so the owner asked them if they knew of anyone else who could help.

The two got to thinking they could get some more of their friends to come and help out. So they called and got a couple more to help but business was still more than they could handle. So more phone calls were made and as the day came to a close, a whole group of young kids were there.

When it was the end of the day, the owner shows up and begins handing out what he told the first boys he would pay them for their work for the day. As you can guess, he started with them and gave the next hired the same pay and on down the line.

Yes, the two hired first did some complaining and just as the master of the house, the owner told them it was his business and his money and what was wrong with him paying everyone the same? The video set was done well and I wish I could get them on DVD on online but they said they would have to get permission from all those involved in the video's and it would cost too much to do that. Too bad as I paid for a set and Pastor Bergman must have too as there was another set in the closet. I thought about copying them to DVD but there is some kind of security strip or something that keeps them from being copied.

That is another story. Who is the master of the house in this parable? Yes, I think you are right, it is God. Now what kind of hiring does God do? Well, He calls people to be His own. He called you to be His own.

When did He call you? For most of you, He called you around the first hour of the day, when you were still a baby. Yes, even as a baby you could be a witness. Many of you know I was a baby born a little too early, about a month or so. Yes, I started out in an incubator breathing in the pure oxygen. Some blame that on me getting as tall as I am. I was a little early and my mom had complications with it all. My dad got a call from the doctor in the middle of the night that his young wife, only 19 years old was for all practical purposes going to die. He called my dad and told him if he knew anyone who would pray that he had done all he could but her kidneys were shutting down and whatever else he knew would mean that she was on her last for this world.

He did some calling and an aunt of his and her husband got word and prayed for hours. His aunt told how each of them were hardly able to stand up after being on their knees so long. It took awhile for their knees to get over that.

My Mom was brought through it by the grace of God and not only had one child but 4 more and so many other children and adults who had their faith strengthened by a woman who was miraculously brought through to live another day, in fact almost 80 years more.

Many of us came to the “work” the Lord has for us in His vineyard as the first hired. Some may have to work in the heat of the work, some even having to die while working for the Lord. You are still alive, working, yes sometimes in the heat of the times but looking forward to the day drawing to a close but also the payment agreed upon.

It is the payment that the master of the house said He would pay and that is eternal life. There are those who aren’t “hired until later in life.” They may have not had to sweat it out, working in the heat of the day. We are reminded of one of the thieves on the cross who initially had some not too good words for Jesus but as the Holy Spirit worked on his heart, hanging on that cross next to Jesus, he was brought to faith and professed that faith by asking Jesus to remember him in His kingdom.

Think about it. What kind of life did the thief lead? Did he start out OK but then fell into a life of sin? Was he always a trouble maker, making his parents wonder where they had gone wrong? Were there those who warned him that he would come to an evil

end? We don't know but whatever the reason, he was sentenced to die on a cross just as Jesus and the other guy.

He was faced with a cruel death. Did he look over his life and wonder how he got to where he was now? Did he replay his life while he struggled with the pain and the ability to take the next breath? What was it that the Holy Spirit used to have Him look to Jesus for his future? Maybe we can ask him when we are spending eternity in heaven. Will we know or will we even want to wonder about accounts like these?

When Jesus brought up this parable it was among other parables in Matthew. It comes after the the rich young man who had to think about giving up all he had and following Jesus. That is after the text for the sermon from last week where I got the forgiveness number messed up with Peter finding out that forgiveness should be limitless, pointing to the forgiveness of Jesus Himself.

Jesus came up with this parable to show that He can give the gifts He wants, when He wants and because He is in charge, who are you who have received such a great gift from Him to tell Him who He can and can not bless in the way and in the amount He wants? Should it make any difference to us how and in what amount He chooses to give His gifts to whoever, whenever?

Are any of you are reading along with the Today's Light readings in the bulletin each week? If you are, you have been reading in Galatians. What was Paul's disgust with them? They were falling for those who came to them and told them that in order to be believers they had to be circumcised. These people talking to them were religious leaders or their representatives like Paul was. They made a whole lot of sense. God had this one thing that He had believers ever since Abraham, their spiritual father, to do to show who they were in the Lord.

Paul comes down on them hard in Galatians. He could see that to give in on this one point would lead to a life of slavery, a life looking to the Lord to deal with them on their terms and not His and the freedom that the Lord has given all who are "hired" by Him, would be in jeopardy.

You may wonder about this hiring. You may be thinking, if you are hired, isn't this then working for the Lord? You might think of the verse from Luke where the 72 disciples were sent out two by two by Jesus: Luke 10:7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.

I know this text is used many times as proof that a pastor should be paid but if we look at a similar account in Matthew where Jesus sends out the 12, what does it say? 10:8-10 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

Food, yes food. The 72 went out and were taken care of wherever they went and if they didn't get a hearing, they were shake the dust off of their feet just as the 12 were to do. They were to witness first though. Yes, they had to take the treatment that was to come to them, sometimes good and other times not so good.

How many of you have had to face down those who would take your life just because you look to Jesus for your salvation? You might say you have endured a little heat but to be confronted with the loss of your life, that may be a little different. Oh the devil would like you to think you are enduring hell or death of who you are, but as we know, he is a liar, he has been from the start.

The Lord has "hired" you through the Water and the Word. Your payment was put in place when Jesus finished paying for your sins and the sins of the whole world. It is the same payment for all no matter when they were hired.

I know there are those who think the passage that there are levels of heaven and that some will receive a greater reward. When the reward is eternal life, what greater reward could there be? The Mom of James and John wanted her sons to be on Jesus' right and left in heaven but how did Jesus handle it? It wasn't up to Him.

If it isn't up to Him, then who? He who died for all, who is interceding for everyone especially those who believe, if he isn't finding places for believers then maybe there isn't even that place at the table.

It makes no difference when a person is brought into the kingdom, all who have been brought in will live forever with Jesus. I guess we could discuss these supposed crowns but then we would be talking about our sin tainted works in this life for all our works are tainted and would doom us to hell if it weren't for the righteousness of Jesus clothing us.

The Lord is in charge of payment, even undeserving as we are. Let us give thanks that all, the youngest believer who is given faith in the womb like John the Baptist, to the man who was in the process of dying on the cross next to Jesus, all will

who believe will be paid the wages of paradise, the wages Christ paid for on the cross that day for each of us.