

Sunday 24 September 2023 Pentecost 17 Kenmore & Cathedral

Matthew 20:1-16

20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

20:2 After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

20:3 When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace;

20:4 and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

20:5 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.

20:6 And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'

20:7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

20:8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

20:9 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

20:10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.

20:11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,

20:12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

20:13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?'

20:14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

20:15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

20:16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Sermon:

Well the Union delegates and the Chamber of Commerce have been onto me about this reading and parable from Jesus!

Just won't wash in Australia; won't pass the Pub test:

- ✚ Firstly what if some of those workers were women
 - We all know that in Australia you just don't pay women equal wages with men, its just NOT right for Aussie Blokes!
- ✚ Secondly some of those workers may have been Island Labourers,
 - and we definitely don't pay those migrants the same as good old Aussie blokes!
- ✚ Thirdly, what if some of those workers were Refugees:

- We definitely don't pay refugees the same as Good Aussie Male Worker's

So I really had to have a good look at what Jesus was trying to say with this parable:

✚ Let's start with the beginning:

- For the kingdom of heaven is like
- So like last week's Gospel Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of God
- Somewhere we all aspire to be part of.

The challenge comes at the very end:

- So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

This is something Jesus is want to say quite often in his teaching:

I find this challenging

- Even though I mock the English with their Queues
- Story of Rhodes, English QQQQ, me RSTUVWXYZ
- I tend to believe there needs to be some order:
- BUT this is not about order and filing into Heaven like sheep!
- This is about the GREAT LEVELLER people of faith are all equal in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - It doesn't rest on how many church services you have attended, who your parents or grandparents were, what positions you have held where, whether in the church or society.

One of the Big challenges in our secular world is we tend to place importance on material well being or our heritage:

✚ I should get in first I am an educated, White Australian Male, with a Multicultural European background and I own my own home!

BUT THESE THINGS DON'T COUNT WHEN IT COMES TO ENTRY INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

The parable is about the Generosity of God:

are you envious because I am generous?'

No matter how long you have been a person of Faith you are welcomed into the Kingdom, this equality is so foreign to us,

We struggle to accept our sisters as equals,

our indigenous people,

migrants,

refugees.

The challenge is to stop being a Gatekeeper of the Kingdom and ensure our personal faith is secure enough for us to enter it.