

## Temp Jobs

### Learning

**Introducing the Parable** (some example content you can engage with to prep and/or as a group)

- **Read Matthew 20:1-16**
- **Context:** Between this parable and the last ones we studied Jesus has offered teaching on divorce, children, and the difficulties of being rich, concluding with the famous statement “But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matt 19:30). In short, leading up to this parable Jesus is reversing conventional religious wisdom in all three of these areas. The question that Jesus tells the parable as a response to is from Peter, “What then will there be for us?” (Matt 19:27)
- **Culture:** A Denarius is a typical days wage, this is what is offered and paid to all. It is important to understand the societal position of day-laborers, in most cases, they were worse off than slaves and servants. Day laborers could be hired, abused, then discarded, but slaves and servants were a long-term investment, part of the household, protected, and given adequate care.
- **Interesting Word:** The Greek word used for “friend” (v. 13) is *hetaire* and it has strong negative connotations. It is the word Jesus says to Judas at his betrayal. It is the word Jesus In modern slang it would be the equivalent to calling someone a “buster,” a “chump,” a “snitch,” for more context go listen to 2Pac, Notorious BIG, or Eminem :)
- **Themes:** God awards us with generosity, not according to merit, effort, or accolades. Rest in God’s generosity and be generous towards others less you be on the receiving end of judgment.
- **Quote for closing the discussion:**

“For if the world could have been saved by bookkeeping, it would have been saved by Moses, not Jesus. The law was just fine. And God gave it a good thousand years or so to see if anyone could pass a test like that. But nobody did – when it became perfectly clear that there was ‘no one who was righteous, not even one’ (Rom. 3:10; Ps. 14:1-3), that ‘both Jews and Gentiles were all under the power of sin’ (Rom. 3:9) – God gave up on salvation by the books. He canceled everybody’s records in the death of Jesus and rewarded us all, equally and fully, with a new creation in the resurrection of the dead.” Robert Capon

**Dialogue Questions** (some example questions for this content above)

- **Read a 2nd time - Matthew 20:1-16**
- What are the dominating ideas in this parable? Compare, connect, and contrast them.
- What do you think Jesus is emphasizing here? Grace or Judgement?
- Is there added significance to this parable since Jesus’ crucifixion is looming in the days ahead?

**Implication Questions** (some example questions/challenges that engage real life now)

- What an interesting parable for our time. We live in an age outraged by inequality and pay gaps, here it is the unequivocal equality of pay that is offensive. Would you be offended if you were one of the earlier hired workers?
- It seems that Jesus is intentionally offensive in this parable, having the owner pay the last first just to falsely raise the other workers’ expectations. Is this like Jesus? Has he done this to you? If so why do you think he would do this?
- Why is hearing of goodness so often the occasion for our envy and anger?
- What implications does this parable have for us as disciples of Jesus? What about our relationships with others?