

## Matthew 19:30-20:16 The Call to Christian Service and the Promise of Rewards

Introduction: I have seen ads which read, "Help wanted: good pay." This ad illustrates the text that we have today.

### I. The Lord's explanation concerning rewards.

- A. Peter had asked, "What's in it for us apostles?" verse 19:27.
- B. Jesus had answered, "Twelve thrones, ruling the twelve tribes of Israel," verse 19:28.
- C. Jesus had also said, "All who sacrifice for me will be rewarded a hundredfold," verse 19:29.
- D. Now Jesus adds "Many who are first shall be last" etc, verse 19:30.
  1. By this he informed the apostles and other Christians of that day that they had no priority in the reward department.
  2. They were the first church members, the first officers, the first to forsake all, and the first workers in the Lord's vineyard.
  3. But many of the early Christians will be last in rewards.

### II. The parable which illustrates this truth, Matthew 20:1-16.

- A. The workers called early in the morning represent the Christians called to service first, verses 20:1-2.
  1. These are the first Christian workers on the scene.
  2. They do a vital work.
  3. They are promised a penny for their pay. (Not the United States penny, but a Roman silver coin, a generous day's pay.)
  4. This represents the apostles' promise of a throne in Israel.
- B. Some workers are called at the third hour, verses 20:3-4.
  1. These represent Christians called to service after Christianity was established and spread, but was still quite young.
  2. Workers were needed just as much as at the first.
  3. These were promised "whatsoever is right."
- C. Some workers are called at the sixth hour, verse 20:5.
  1. In the Hebrew work day this was about noon. (Twelve hour work day.)
  2. These represent Christian workers called about the middle of the church age: Christianity is well underway.
  3. Workers are still needed in the Lord's service.
- D. Some are called at the ninth hour, verse 20:5.
  1. In the Hebrew day this was about 3 o'clock or mid-afternoon.
  2. These represent Christian workers called as the Christian age draws to a close.
  3. Workers are still needed in the field.
- E. Some are called at the eleventh hour, verses 20:6-7.
  1. Fruit is perishing in the field and more workers are hired.
  2. These represent Christian workers called just shortly before the second coming of Christ.
  3. They are promised, "whatsoever is right."
- F. Finally quitting time comes and it is time to pay off, verse 8.
  1. Those hired at the eleventh hour were paid for a full day, verse 9. (This was generous and they had no complaint.)
  2. Those hired first received a penny, verse 10.
  3. This was a generous day's pay and was all that they were promised and was therefore all that they had a right to claim, verses 11-15.

- G. The point of the whole parable was that the apostles and early Christians would not have any right to greater rewards on the basis of being first in service.
  - 1. Some of the early Christians will be last in rewards.
  - 2. Some of the last Christians will be first in rewards.

### III. Some lessons for us today.

- A. This scripture teaches that the Lord will be fair in giving out rewards.
  - 1. The apostles and early Christians will be given all they are promised.
  - 2. Nobody will be shortchanged.
  - 3. We ought to know that anyway.
- B. It teaches us that Jesus will be generous in giving out rewards.
  - 1. In the parable this is illustrated best by the eleventh hour workers receiving a full day's pay.
  - 2. But it is also illustrated by the pay received by the early workers. (This was a generous day's wage.)
  - 3. In the end time when Jesus gives out rewards every Christian worker from every age will be generously rewarded, verse 19:29. (Nobody will feel cheated.)
- C. It teaches that the Lord will not reward on the same basis that man uses to give rewards.
  - 1. Man rewards on the basis of who pioneered the work, who has seniority, who puts in the most hours, who is the most talented, who has the right political connections, who is the best looking, who is the most likable, etc.
  - 2. The Lord will reward on the basis of love and devotion to God, willingness to sacrifice for God, faithfulness to the task, dedication to truth and righteousness, and submissiveness to the will of God.
- D. It teaches that God still needs workers today.
  - 1. Even though this may be the eleventh hour in Christianity.
  - 2. Even though it may be the eleventh hour in our own personal lives.

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