

MAIN POINT: God is more loving than we could ever imagine, teaching us that we should expect the unexpected to be exalted in His Kingdom. (Matthew 19:30-20:16)

I. THE FIRST TO THE LAST (vv. 1-7)

- Who's who? The first, the last, and the vineyard owner.
- Two questions:
 - 1) Who are these last minute workers, and why are they still standing there?
 - 2) Did the vineyard owner make a mistake and miscalculate how much help He would need?

II. THE LAST TO THE FIRST (vv. 8-15)

- Two reasons the expected tend to despise unexpected:
 - 1) I've been here longer. I've done more. I've got more religious status. It's only fair that God would reward me more!
 - 2) I am more righteous than *those* Christians. (Matt. 5:17-20, Luke 18:9-14)
- What do we learn about God? ***God is more full of goodness than we could ever imagine.***
- What do we learn about ourselves? ***We are more undeserving than we could ever imagine.*** (Luke 15:31-32)

III. THE UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM (vv. 19:30, 20:16)

- To those who would be picked first:
 - 1) Remember that the way up is the way down.
 - 2) Reflect the goodness of God by sharing your status with the unexpected.
 - 3) Rejoice in the generosity of God toward others.
- To those who would be picked last: Do you think God made some big mistake when He called you?
 - 1) Come!
 - 2) Stay! (And finally, rest.) (Matt. 9:11-13)

Suggested Reading:

The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary by Jonathan Pennington

Next Week's Preaching Text: Matthew 20:20-28

**Questions/Discovery Points for
Life Groups/Families**

Please Read Matthew 20:1-16

1. In connection with the story of the rich young ruler, who do the "first" and "last" probably represent in this parable?
2. For you personally, do you struggle to rejoice in God's kindness toward others? How does that manifest itself?
3. If you are someone who naturally fits into the expected/first category, what are practical ways that you can express humility and align with the upside-down nature of the Kingdom?
4. If you are someone who naturally fits into the unexpected/last category, what are practical ways that you can express humility and align with the upside-down nature of the Kingdom?
5. What does a rooted permanence look like in a local church?
6. What does this parable reveal about the character of God? Why does this matter to your life?