

UNFAIR FAITH

Matthew 20:1-16

Big Idea: *Grace isn't fair. And that's the best news you'll ever hear.*

The Setup

Matthew 19:27-30

Peter asks, "We have left everything to follow You. What then will there be for us?" Peter is doing math.

Jesus wraps the whole parable in the same sentence (19:30; 20:16): "The last will be first, and the first will be last."

1. The Owner Goes Looking

Matthew 20:1-7

The owner went out at 6am, 9am, noon, 3pm, and 5pm, just one hour before quitting time.

The 5pm crew's answer: "Because no one has hired us." (v. 7)

You didn't find the vineyard. The Owner found you.

2. The Owner Pays in Reverse

Matthew 20:8-12

The grumblers' complaint: "You have made them equal to us." (v. 12)

Their problem wasn't what they received. It was what someone else received.

Comparison can turn a blessing into an insult.

3. The Owner Asks Two Questions

Matthew 20:13-15

"Friend" (Greek: *hetaire*). Also see Matthew 22:12 and 26:50.

Question 1: "Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?" (v. 13) God has never broken a promise to you.

Question 2: "Are you envious because I am generous?" (v. 15) Literally: *"Is your eye evil because I am good?"*

The problem is never God's generosity. The problem is my eyesight.

4. The Owner Flips the Line

Matthew 20:16

Compared to the holiness of God, every one of us is a 5pm worker.

Read later: Luke 23:39-43 | 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 | Matthew 20:17-21

If God were fair, we'd all be lost. Because He's gracious, we can all be found.

Two People at the Pay Table

The Scorekeeper	The Grace-Receiver
asks, "Why them?"	asks, "Why me?"

Grumbling asks, "What do I deserve?" Gratitude asks, "What did He give?"

Which one am I today?

Monday Action Steps

1. **Retire your scorecard.** Pray by name for one person whose blessing you've quietly resented.
2. **Count your denarius.** Each morning, before your phone, write three things you didn't earn.
3. **Celebrate someone else's payday.** Call or text someone to celebrate their win (Romans 12:15).
4. **Go to the marketplace.** Invite one overlooked person to church, your group, or your table.
5. **Check your motive for serving.** Do one act of service in secret (Matthew 6:4).

My Notes