

GENEROUS SERVICE

God is love. Love does not contradict justice, but rather, enhances it. The parable of the labourers helps us see the heart of Christ. Beyond all expectations, he gives the same opportunity and reward to all. The mission of a Christian consists in freely loving and serving others without reserve. How far we are from meeting this ideal!

1. God loves us for who we are and not for what we do. This parable isn't aiming at teaching us how to be landowners, workers, or labourers, but it speaks to us about life in the kingdom of God. It's hard for us to accept that God's ways are not our ways. Christ comes to us as a generous landowner who doesn't pay according to how much we get done, but from a free and unmerited love. *"Not as we deserve, but according to your goodness."* This is the good news of the Gospel.

2. We're making a big mistake when we seek to apply our human standards of justice, which are always unjust, to God. Instead of trying to become like God, we try to make him more like us: applying calculations, taxes, expenses, and salaries. We want to make a deal with God. We want instant payment for the time we dedicate to his work, which practically reduces us to the level of employees who fulfil certain rites without any personal commitment, who pray without putting any heart into it and who participate in the Sacraments without any fervour.

We want a “*just*” God, who gives each one his due; the one who does more deserves more, and the one who does less, less. We want a meticulous account of all that we’ve done so that we can be paid proportionally, fairly.

3. The God of this parable is a generous God who doesn’t limit his gifts to what we deserve. He gives without expecting anything back; he chooses to love us for who we are and not for what we do. The labourers weren’t irritated on account of being underpaid; but they felt they were victims of some injustice because they witnessed the landowner’s love and goodness towards the others.

There are Christians who believe that religion is about what they give to God. But no, religion is about what God gives to us. This is the mindset of mercenaries. They don’t capture how dangerous it is to demand “*what is just*” from God. The true labourer, after the Lord’s heart, doesn’t care about his salary. His delight is to work for the Kingdom of God.

It is a gift to be called to serve Christ. But when our encounter with God through faith happens after a long waiting period, we’re speaking of a free and generous gift. We should always look to the things that are above, opening our hearts to welcome the gift of God and tell him: Thank you Lord! This is what we are going to do now as we continue the Celebration of the Eucharist.

Paul the Apostle reminds us, "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not others, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward - you are serving the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24). Do you perform your daily tasks and responsibilities with cheerfulness and diligence for the Lord's sake? And do you give generously to others, especially to those in need of your care and support?

"Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may serve you joyfully and serve my neighbour willingly with a generous heart, not looking for how much I can get, but rather looking for how much I can give."