

HOMILY FOR THE 25TH SUNDAY IN OT - MATTHEW 2017

1. God speaking through Isaiah says my ways are not your ways, my thought are not your thoughts, I am way beyond your way of thinking
 - a. Rings true in the parable of Jesus
 - b. God is like a landowner needing men to harvest his crops
 - c. 5 times he goes out hire workmen for his vineyard
 - i. Agrees to the usual daily wage
 - ii. Goes out again, midmorning, finds workers looking for job
 - iii. Hires them for a just wage
 - iv. Already sounding unusual, workers expect to have to haggle for anything
 - v. Keeps going out: noon, midafternoon hires them as well offering a just wage
 - vi. At the end of the day there are still more laborers standing around
 - vii. When asks why are you just idling all day, answer no one has hired us
 - viii. Most people would think this landowner sure is foolish
 - ix. They will barely get out the vineyard and will be time to pay
 - d. When it comes to paying the workers, landowner certainly is foolish
 - i. Certainly, should have paid those who worked the full day first
 - ii. By paying the last workers first, he emphasized his unfair generosity giving all of them a full days' salary
 - iii. See why those who worked full day in the sun might feel disgruntled
 - iv. Landowner however, recognizes the anxiety that the later laborers had
 - v. They did not have a contract or agreement, simply depended on what the landowner considered a just wage.
 - vi. Last ones hired certainly would have been surprised and grateful for getting a full day's wage, probably had been thinking how would they feed hungry family
2. Hearing this parable is as challenging for us as it was the listeners to Jesus
 - a. Might wonder where we fit into the gospel
 - b. How hard have we worked for the kingdom of God?
 - c. Are we like the 9 am workers or the noon workers?
 - d. Probably do not think of ourselves as being 5 PM workers
3. Tend to forget is that we do not have a right to the kingdom of God
 - a. God offers us a good natural life
 - b. Like the animals and plants, we have a cycle of life to enjoy
 - c. Unlike the animals and plants, we have the capacity for evil
 - d. Rather than a sense of wonder and gratitude for our life, we can abuse each other or our environment
 - e. We can waste things, destroy them, without thinking about God's plan for the universe
4. Even more wondrous is God is offering us something more than the natural world

- a. God became one of us so that He might invite us to be part of His family
 - b. He offers us His own life in giving us His body and blood as heavenly food
 - c. He even offers us hope for a life that will go beyond our natural surroundings
 - d. He offers us hope for a new body in a new heaven and a new earth
5. This hope is not something we deserve, none of us will ever be holy enough to earn this gift
- a. Think of the happiness of the laborers who got work only at 5 PM and received a full day's wage
 - b. God is offering us not merely a natural life cycle
 - c. He is giving us hope for eternity
6. If we really believed this promise, we would be ecstatic with joy
- a. Question is whether we believe in the promise or are we grumbling that others seem to have a better life than we do