



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. "He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' "Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.' "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' "The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' "But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Matthew 20:1-16

Surprising grace

What kind of Christian are you? Are you a 6 a.m. Christian or a 5 p.m. Christian?

You might be a 6 a.m. sort of Christian if you get up in the morning and think, "How can I serve Jesus today? I can't wait to do it." You give him everything that you can. Whether you are serving your family or shopping at the store, your constant thought is "How can I serve Jesus right here, right now?"

You might be a 5 p.m. sort of Christian if you get up in the morning and think, "How can I make this day about me?" You sit on your hands and only think about what you can get out of the day. You lazily lounge around with little to no thought of serving Jesus at all.

But notice, regardless of where these workers fit in the day, Jesus, the landowner, is still coming to them and asking them to come and work. I mean, if I'm the boss, I don't want the slackers. I want the go-getters, the ones who are on the ball and who are ready to go to work for me. Jesus also wants the ones who have been standing around all day with their hands in their pockets.

Jesus wants us all to come and work.

What we do matters to God, but all we do does not earn God's favor for us. Notice the pay that each worker



Surprising grace - continued

receives at the end. Everyone gets paid for a day's wage whether he worked for 12 hours or only 1. That's what is so surprising about grace. The worker gets paid out of the master's generosity, not because of the intensity or length of work. Because of Jesus' love for us and his surprising grace for us, we have forgiveness of sins and an eternity in heaven regardless of how long, how hard, or how dedicated we are to him. Eternity is a free gift from him!

At the very same time, Jesus would have us get to work right away, right now. He would have us wake up in the morning and say, "My life matters for Jesus; I'm going to get up and serve him today no matter what I do." And then he would have us lay our heads on our pillows at night and say, "The only thing that counts before God is Jesus' righteousness." The only thing that counts is what Jesus did for you. He was, and he still is all in for you. He gave his all for you on the cross. He lives and reigns in heaven for you, all day and all night. His life and his death are the only things that count for you.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, sometimes I think too highly of my work. I boast and brag about all the things I do for you. And sometimes I don't think enough about what I should be doing for you. I sit on my hands instead of standing on my feet eager and ready to serve. Make me always ready and eager to serve you. Teach me always to rest and rejoice in the gift that you, dear Jesus, have won for me. That's the only thing that counts. Amen.