



“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Matthew 20:16

Life’s not fair!

“Life’s not fair!” Do you agree with that statement? Have you ever said that yourself?

Imagine this: Monday through Friday you put in the proverbial blood, sweat, and tears at your job. On Friday, you receive a large paycheck. You’re pumped!

What if your co-worker, who had worked just one day that week, got paid the same amount? That would not be fair. You would be irritated! You might protest this unfairness to your boss. And if your boss said to you, “Life’s not fair”—you’d be outraged!

We want life to be fair.

Fairness makes sense. We live in a culture that emphasizes a person’s ability to work hard and get what they deserve. If we put in longer hours at our job, we make more than those who don’t. If we study harder for an exam, we get a better grade than those who didn’t. If we practice harder, we get more playing time. The best, brightest, and most beautiful all go to the front of the line. It’s only fair!

Jesus told a story that completely flips this way of thinking. In the story, a landowner (Jesus) hires workers (us). Some work a lot; some work little. But get this: they all get paid the same. Jesus finished the parable by saying, “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” What’s Jesus’ point?

He does not care about fairness!

Instead, Jesus is all about graciousness!

Jesus’ story illustrates God’s grace. Grace is God’s love to you, it has nothing to do with you. Grace has everything to do with God. Grace is irrational in the sense that it is not based on anything you do or deserve. Grace has nothing to do with your talents or abilities. Grace defies logic. Grace is—quite literally—unfair.

What if God *was* fair? What if God did give us what we deserve? What we deserve, because of our sin and unholiness, is death and separation from God. What God gives us instead is the gracious gift of life forever with him (Romans 6:23). Fairness means we deserve “last.” Grace is us coming in “first.”

The next time you hear someone say, “Life’s not fair!” remember: they’re correct. Life’s *not* fair.

That’s a good thing! It means we have eternal life with Christ.

Prayer: Dear God, we praise you for your grace to us. For the times we imagine we deserve something from you, forgive us. Through your Word, help us to know the grace you’ve given us in Christ, and grow in a deeper and fuller appreciation of that gift. Amen.