

JESUS WANTS WORKERS

Matthew 20:1-16.

LESSON 109 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21).

BIBLE TEXT

Matthew 20:1-16.

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give

them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

NOTES

The Call for Workers

Jesus had twelve friends who were called disciples. They loved to follow Jesus and listen to His words. All of us want to follow Jesus, too, and listen to His words. One day Jesus told a story, which taught an important lesson. Let us try to learn the lesson that Jesus has for us in this chapter.

The story Jesus told was about a householder who had a vineyard. Early one morning, probably about six o'clock, he went out to hire men to work for him. He promised to pay them a certain amount for their work and sent them out to the vineyard. About the third hour, which is nine o'clock by our time, as the householder was in the market place, he saw others standing there, with nothing to do. So the owner of the vineyard said to them, “Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.” They, too, went out to work in the vineyard.

Again at about twelve o'clock, and again at three in the afternoon, the man went to the market – perhaps he took some grapes to market. Again he found men standing there idle. He needed still more workers to harvest his crop. So he hired more men. As before, he promised to pay them what was right.

Once more he went to the market. It was now five o'clock in the afternoon – the day was almost gone, but his crop must be harvested! To his surprise he found others standing there idle. He walked up to them and said, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” What do you suppose was their answer? “because no man hath hired us.” So the owner of the vineyard said at once, “Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that

shall ye receive.” There was only one hour left before quitting time, but it was not too late to begin this important work.

The Reward for Service

The householder had a helper whom he called the steward. The steward is the man who handles his master’s business, or has charge of certain important duties. At the close of the busy day the master told his steward to call the workers and give them their pay. The first ones to receive their wages were the ones who had been hired at five o’clock. The steward gave them their earnings. One by one the workers came to the steward who paid them their wages.

Last of all we see the men coming who had begun working early in the morning. No doubt by this time they are very tired, having worked from early until late. The steward gives them the same amount as he had given all the others – a penny, which probably amounts to about ten kobo of our money. But they are not satisfied – they feel that they should receive more than the men who had worked only from five until six o’clock. At once they murmur against the owner of the vineyard. They are offended because he gave the late-comers the same wages as themselves. After all, they thought: we have worked from early until late; we have spent all these long hours in the hot sun, and now you give those who have worked but one hour just as much as you give us. They thought: Surely this man is unfair to us.

But let us listen to the good man who had hired these people as he answers one of the murmurers, “Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.” Cannot you see the worker as he turns away and pouts? His heart is full of envy. How do you suppose the good man felt who had hired the workers? After all, he had done as he had promised. It was his vineyard and his money, and he could do with it as he wished. The ones who began working early in the morning had agreed to work for this amount; now they were jealous of the men who had worked only a short time and received the same pay.

The Bible tells us to “do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Philippians 2:14). These people should have been satisfied with their wages, for they had received the amount promised them.

God’s Vineyard

We believe Jesus meant the householder who hired the workers was God the Father. By “vineyard” He might have meant the Church, as that is where there is much work to be done. The labourers are those who are saved and work for Jesus, and the market place is the world. Before we are saved, we are like the idle people in the market place. We cannot work for Jesus before we are saved. Then when we get saved and work for Jesus, we are labourers in the “vineyard.”

Some children are saved at a very young age. Those who begin to work for Jesus soonest, are the happiest people. Others wait until they are older and then give their heart to Jesus. Still others are saved when they are old. We might say these people start working for Jesus at the “eleventh hour.” But it is never too late to get saved while Jesus is calling. Until the Door of Mercy is closed, the invitation will go out, “Whosoever will,” may come to Jesus.

The steward in the story may be Jesus Christ, who is “declared to be the Son of God with power” (Romans 1:4). God, the Father, like the kind householder in the lesson, has given all things into the hands of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 13:3). Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

There is work for everyone to do in the “vineyard” of the Lord. We believe there is only a little more time in which to work and win souls for Jesus. But if we are saved we should go out and help others find Jesus. We do not want to be found idle when Jesus comes.

Jealous of Others

Jesus is not pleased with people who are jealous of others. Envy and jealousy can cause people to do terrible things. A long time ago we studied about a boy named Joseph who was very much loved by his father, Jacob. Joseph's father gave him a beautiful coat of many colours. Joseph had eleven brothers and the youngest one was named Benjamin. When the brothers saw that the father loved Joseph more than all his children, they hated Joseph. They talked very naughtily to him, and became more and more hateful and jealous of him.

One day the father sent Joseph out to see the older brothers who were feeding the flocks. From a great distance the young men saw their little brother coming, wearing the coat of many colours. They planned to kill Joseph and throw him into a deep pit. But one of the boys said, "Let us not kill him." So they decided to sell Joseph to a company of men going down into Egypt. God had a great work for Joseph to do later, and He protected him from being killed. For many years Joseph worked for God in the land of Egypt. It was hatred and jealousy that made the brothers of Joseph treat him so badly.

According to Our Work

When someone else gets more than we think they deserve, we should be happy for them. Some people think that when kindness is shown to others it is an act of injustice to themselves. If a brother or sister or a playmate receives a pretty gift, we should be happy instead of jealous.

We read in Revelation 22:12: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." It will not be the length of time that we have worked for Jesus that counts, nor the long hours spent in His service. If we have been faithful and done with all our heart what Jesus wants us to do, we shall be rewarded. Perhaps, like the labourers in the vineyard, some who are saved but a short time will receive the same reward as those who have been saved for many, many years. Jesus said, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Jesus has promised that if we are faithful unto death, He will give us a crown of life. All of us want to be among that number who are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

QUESTIONS

1. How many times did the householder go out to hire labourers? Matthew 20:1-6.
2. What time was it when the last ones were hired? Matthew 20:6.
3. Why were the people idle? Matthew 20:7.
4. Was everyone satisfied with his wages? Matthew 20:10-12.
5. Was the householder pleased with the men who murmured? Matthew 20:14, 15.

LESSON RESOURCES

TITLE

JESUS WANTS WORKERS

Lesson 109

Mathew 20:1-16

A Half Day's Work

WATCH & PRAY 74



d: m; s, d` : s: t: l; s, l:- s; s, t; l, s: l: m:-:-

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m` : r` : d` : t: d` : t: l:- r` : d` : t: l: t: l: s:-

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A Half Day's Work

Don't do a half day's work for the Lord

And expect a whole day's pay;

Only what's done with all of your heart

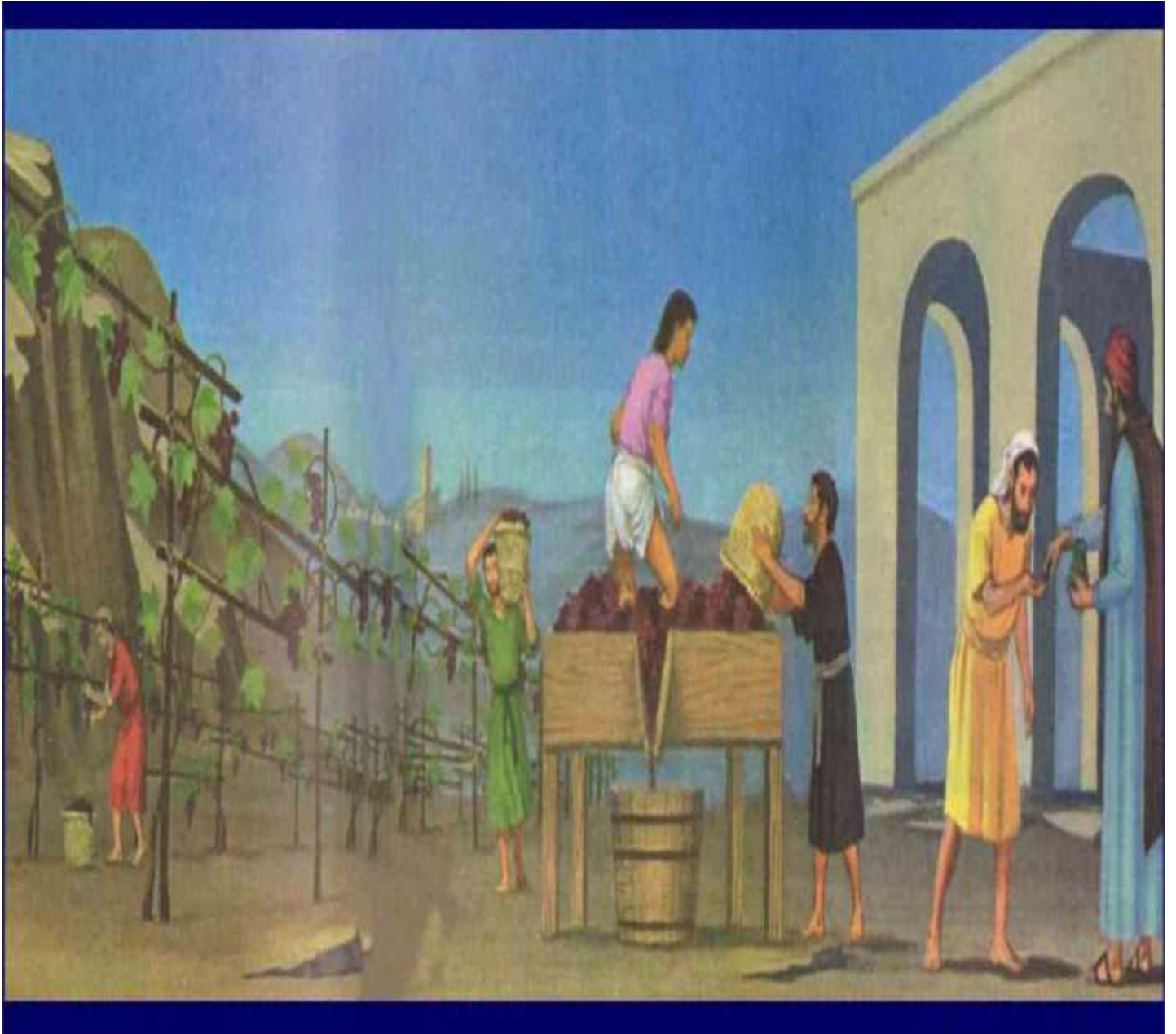
Counts on the judgement day.

How can you sit idly by, knowing souls are doomed to die?

Don't do a half day's work for the Lord

And expect a whole day's pay.

PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2

