

Payday at the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16; *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 396-404

2 Lesson

John was busy raking leaves in his yard. After an hour, his friend Sam came by and offered to help. John found another rake and the two boys worked together. Two hours later they were done with the job. John's father was very pleased. He gave each boy some money to say "thank you." John and Sam received the same pay, even though John had worked one hour more. John thought to himself, *This is not fair. Then he remembered a story Jesus told about fairness.*

"The kingdom of heaven is like a land-owner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard."

In Jesus' time, men would gather in the marketplace at six o'clock in the morning. There they would wait for someone to come and hire them. One morning a vineyard owner came looking for workers. At six o'clock he hired some men. He agreed to pay them the usual pay for 12 hours of work.

At nine o'clock he came back to the marketplace. He

saw men still standing around. "Go work in my vineyard and I'll pay you what is right," he told them. At noon and at three o'clock he hired more men. Again at five o'clock in the afternoon—just one hour before quitting time—he did the same thing.

At six o'clock in the evening the landowner told his foreman to pay the workers. He should begin with those who were hired last and end with those who were hired first.

First the foreman paid those who had



The Message

God wants us to treat others as He treats us.

Memory Verse

“ ‘God does not show favoritism’ ”

(Acts 10:34, NIV).

worked only an hour. He gave them a full day's pay. Then he paid those who worked for three hours. He gave them a full day's pay, too.

Those who were hired first began to smile. They were sure they would receive more. After all, they had worked longer and harder than the others. It would only be fair, wouldn't it? But when they received their pay, their smiles turned to frowns. They got the same pay as everyone else!

“Wait!” they complained. “Those men only worked an hour. You made them equal to us. We did most of the work, and in the heat of the day too.”

“I'm not being unfair to you,” said the landowner. “You agreed to work for the usual pay for a day's work. That's what I'm paying you. I can do what I want to with my money. Don't be jealous because I am generous.”

And then Jesus said it again. “The last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Do you like that story? Do you think it's fair? You may not. And that's the point Jesus was making. God does not treat us the way we deserve. God treats us much, much better than that. It is His grace that saves all of us, those who accept Him at the last minute and those who accept Him early. God doesn't have to save any of us. He does it because He loves us.

Do you treat others in God's family the same way God has treated

you? When someone is mean to you, do you treat them with love and kindness? Try to treat others as God treats us. In that way you show that God is much, much better than simply fair.





S A B B A T H

READ If possible, have an adult family member take you to a field or vineyard and read your lesson story together. Imagine that you are in the vineyard in your story, watching the workers.

READ Read the memory verse in Acts 10:34, last part. Tell what it means. Make six cutouts of a cluster of grapes. Write one word from your memory verse on each. Write the text on the last cluster cutout.

PRAY Pray for people who work on farms.

S U N D A Y

READ During family worship read the lesson story in the Bible (Matthew 20:1-16).

DO Make a list of some of your favorite things, such as toys, clothes, pictures. Put your most favorite item on top of the list, followed by your next favorite thing, etc. Now make a list of your friends. Put your favorite friend first, your next favorite friend next, etc. Does God have a "people list" like that?

PRAY Pray for your friends.

DO Arrange your memory verse cutouts in order. Then read or say the verse.

M O N D A Y

DO For family worship, read John 13:35 together. Think of ways you can treat your family better. Draw a picture to show how. Put your picture where you can see it every day. Pray as a family that you will treat each other as God treats you.

DO Arrange your memory verse cutouts in order. Then say the memory verse for your family.

T U E S D A Y

READ During family worship, think of ways you can treat people at school or church better. Plan how your family can do these things. Read John 13:35 again.

DO Say your memory verse together.

DO Play, sing, hum, or listen to "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139).

W E D N E S D A Y

READ With your family read Romans 2:11. How should you treat those you don't know? What can you and your family do for someone you don't know? Remember, God treats everyone better than they deserve.

PRAY Pray for opportunities to treat others kindly.

DO Arrange your memory verse cutouts in the right order and say your memory verse out loud.



T H U R S D A Y

F R I D A Y

DO For family worship, serve grape juice to everyone in your family. While they drink, tell your lesson story in your own words.

READ Read together Luke 23:39-43. Tell how Jesus treated one of the thieves who was crucified next to Him. How is this story like your lesson story?

DO Say your memory verse from memory.

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you not to play favorites.

The vineyard owner needed every worker he could get. He only had a little time before rains would ruin his crop.



DO Make a clay model or draw a picture of three people you have a hard time loving. Why do you feel that way?

Discuss your reasons with your family during worship. Pray together for power to treat others as Jesus would. Read John 15:12 together.

DO Share your experiences this week in treating others well. How did you feel?

DO Act out this week's Bible lesson. Or draw pictures and use them to tell the story to your family. Close by saying your memory verse.

PUZZLE

Directions: To break the following coded message, read your lesson to find out what Jesus said twice. Keeping the words of Jesus in mind, find seven words that explain a basic understanding about salvation.

