

## **SERMON: 20 September 2020 – Rev Alistair Cowper**

### **God is enough: The Justice of God in a World of Inequality (Matthew 20:1-16)**

- Daily wage/bread is everything the worker needs (1)
- He chooses the unchosen (7)
- He begins with the last (8)
- He pays more than is deserved (9)

It sometimes feels as if the world is trying to convince us that we will never have enough or be enough. That we need more in order to reach the place of happiness.

It's easy then to become envious when we see other people who appear to have more than we do, or appear to be more than we are.

The media and the internet don't help. We are constantly bombarded with adverts for more. And things we see we go on to want and before we know it we're convinced that we now need this thing that we never previously even knew about.

Envy is destructive and corrosive. Feeling discontent or resentful because of what we see others have or are, can eat away at us, rob us of contentment, result in us not being at peace.

This appears to be the issue in the parable that Jesus taught about the workers in the vineyard who are all given the same day's wage irrespective of how long they worked in the day.

The ones who worked longest agreed to work for the daily wage but when they saw those who only worked one hour being paid the same, feelings of envy and anger rose up within them as they shifted to feeling like they were being treated unfairly and deserved more.

But the truth was that the daily wage the Master offered was enough. Enough to live on. Enough to allow others to be paid too, and for them to live.

This was the principle here that the daily wage was enough.

Just as daily bread would be enough.

We've been following the story of God's people from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the promised land.

Though we never read it today, the part of the story for today comes from Exodus 16 when the people of God are complaining that they had better food back in Egypt, the place of their captivity.

They might have thought to themselves, 'better to be a slave or a prisoner with a full belly than free and hungry'.

But the point was that the hunger was to test them to trust in the only God who could save them, and bring them real life.

That God would provide enough for them if they trusted.

And we see how the Lord provides the daily food for them, food they'd need to collect and use each day and not store up for themselves, because if they did that, the manna would go bad.

Food that was enough for everyone, not just the powerful few who could grab what they could and set up a business selling it to the poor and weak who hadn't been able to collect their share.

Some might say that's just capitalism rather than the exploitation it is.

The complaining people of Israel were losing their peace because they weren't able to see that they could have enough.

In a sense they were saying God wasn't enough for them.

God was with them on the journey, leading them by fire and cloud and by the hand of Moses, God's servant. But that wasn't enough.

Likewise the workers in the vineyard who'd worked longer than one hour were complaining that the daily wage, enough to live on, wasn't enough.

When the manna appeared in the desert in the morning the people asked 'what is it?'

Moses tells them,

There's the key. The daily bread is enough. The bread that Moses describes as being sent down from above. The bread that God sent finally and most fully in God's son Jesus, the Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger" (John 6:35).

John 6:51

Christ is enough.

If we have Christ we have all we need. We have enough. We don't need to look elsewhere. God is enough.

It might be good to meditate on that thought regularly, daily even, for that is how it's delivered to us,

And by simply repeating to ourselves quietly that God is enough, Christ is enough, I have all I need, we have all we need.

Paul writes to Timothy  
if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these  
(1 Timothy 6:8)

And says to the Philippians,  
I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.  
(Philippians 4:11-13)

Paul knew that what mattered and he knew where his strength and contentment came from - Christ, the Spirit of God within.

The daily bread or daily wage of Christ is all we need.

That daily bread includes the healing of our past and the gift of an eternal future.

Surely that is enough. If we are offered that at the beginning of the day then we don't need to ask for more if at the end we see others receiving the same healing and gift.

Better to rejoice when we see others lifted up to get the same wage that we have been promised.

As someone else has said,  
strive to want what everyone else can have as well.

And seek first the kingdom of God.

Amen.