

NO SENIORITY

- The setting of this parable is found in Matthew 19 ...
 - Little children brought to Jesus (v. 13)
 - Rich young ruler's question (v. 16)
 - Peter's question (v. 27)
- **Jesus' principle: There is no seniority in the Kingdom of God** – “the last shall be first, and the first shall be last” (this saying brackets the parable in 19:30 and 20:16).

Matthew 19:30 – 20:16 [19:30] But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. [20:1] 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.

- The warning in this parable is against having a “hireling” spirit in the work of the Lord. A hireling is “one whose motive and interest in serving another are wholly for gain or wages; a mercenary.” A hireling has wrong motives, wrong attitudes, and wrong expectations in serving the Master. How can you recognize a hireling? By his attitude toward others who are serving the Master!

- As Jesus mentioned in John 11:9, there were twelve hours in the Jewish day, from 6:00 in the morning until 6:00 in the evening. Daytime represents the time we have available to work for the Lord.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

- The Master of the vineyard goes out into the marketplace four times in this parable to hire labourers:
 - Early in the morning – 6:00 am
 - The third hour – 9:00 am
 - The ninth hour – 12:00 pm
 - The eleventh hour – 5:00 pm
- There is only one hour left to work when the Master calls the last labourers (they have been “idle” all day!), but he promises them that they will receive “whatsoever is right” for their wages. The amount owed to each and every labourer is left to the Master to decide.
- When evening has come, those that were hired first were actually paid last; then, to add insult to injury, they receive the very same wage as those that worked only one hour! They begin to complain ...
- This parable is not just about money, it is not just about being a servant, and it is not even primarily about rewards – it is about our MOTIVES and ATTITUDES toward the Master and toward our fellow servants in His vineyard.
- The disciples just didn't get it! One of the very next events recorded by Matthew (in the same chapter) is the mother of James and John coming to Jesus to ask for lofty positions for her sons in his kingdom. The rest of the disciples heard of it and got in a big fight!
- **Matthew 20:25-28** [25] But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; [27] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: [28] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.
- What are we going to do as a Pentecostal movement, as a denomination, as a district, as a local church, as individuals, when God brings eleventh-hour labourers into the Kingdom and blesses them? **WILL WE BE JOYOUS OR JEALOUS?**

- You've perhaps heard of the parable of the prodigal SON? That's not the right title – it should be the parable of the prodigal SONS. Remember why Jesus told this parable in the first place ...
- **Luke 15:2** And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.
- The elder brother needed to repent of his attitude and return to the father's house just as much as his younger brother. He had nothing to lose by his brother's return, but he had grown too protective of the father's house! He did his father's will, but not from the heart.
- One prodigal left the house and wasted his inheritance; the other prodigal stayed in the house and wasted his inheritance! In all these years, he had worked hard, but never once enjoyed a party!
- 'I'm not setting foot in that house as long as that kid's in there! I'm the one who stayed here; look at these calluses on my hands - see those? They're from working this farm. I was here the night he left; I was here when he told dad he'd had it with farming, that my father was out of date. I was here when he walked down the road with his inheritance in a big bag. He didn't even look over his shoulder at us. I was here! I was here when the people came in from the town and they taunted dad that he must have been a great father because his little boy was doing him proud in the big city. I was here and heard dad sometimes sob in his bed at night - and I knew what he was crying about. I was here! And now the kid comes home because he's hungry. He ran out of money and ran out of friends and ran out of food - he's home to sponge off dad again.'
- The younger prodigal son didn't even come home for the right reasons – he was just hungry, poor and tired. But there was one thing the elder prodigal son just didn't understand: **Do you have any idea what goes on in the heart of a father when he thinks his child is dead and he comes home alive?**
- ONE PRODIGAL WAS REBELLIOUS, THE OTHER WAS RELIGIOUS; WHAT THE FATHER WANTED WAS RELATIONSHIP!
- DON'T STAND OUTSIDE! Come in and enjoy the feast! DON'T STAND AROUND IDLE! Get involved in the endtime harvest!
- No matter how long you have been serving the Master, or how new you are to His kingdom – JOIN US IN REAPING THE HARVEST!