

# WELCOME TO SOUTHLAND!

*September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

## Matthew Week 14

### Celebration & Announcements:

- KICK OFF WEEKEND – all the ministries are getting started!
- **Set Free - Oct 29/30** Sign up at [www.mysouthland.com](http://www.mysouthland.com).
- **Early morning Prayer – elections! Tuesday – Thursday! 630-700**
- **Seniors Weekly meetings starting Sept 15 at 1pm at the church.**
- **Camp Open House - Sept 26, 1:30-4:30pm**
  - Ceremony in the church services on Sept 26
  - Drop in come and go
  - Hotdogs
  - Tours of the camp
  - Get people to prepare prayers for camp or camp memories. We will have some boxes in the lobby in the next few weekends for collection.  
At camp we will have a place to pin them up and we will use them on the walls in the future
  - Sign up for the open house online
- **Kids Church / Middle School Midweek** Kids Church starting on Sept 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Middle School Midweek on Wednesday starting in early October.  
If you have kids in middle school and are interested in having them come on Wednesdays, please fill out a form as emailed out or see the church Facebook or Instagram for the link. It will help us plan for numbers and groups!
  - WHY: We need help to know who many kids are potentially attending to plan accordingly
  - WHO: Any kids between the ages of birth and grade 8
  - WHAT: (2 separate age group registrations)
  - Sunday, 9am service for grade 4 and under: [Children's Ministry Registration for Birth to grade 4](#)
  - Age 2 – Gr. 4 starting Sept. 26
  - Birth – Age 2, starting later
  - Wednesday nights for gr. 5-8 starting in October: [Middle School Ministry Registration for Grades 5-8](#)

**Matthew – Gospel means GOOD NEWS.** As we have been going through Matthew that past few months, I hope you have been encouraged by the simplicity of the GOOD NEWS.

**Intro:** Jesus' answer to his question, "how can I inherit eternal life?" was ultimately the last thing he said, "...and come, follow me." But to do this he would have to get rid of the idol in his life... he wouldn't be able to serve TWO MASTERS – just as Jesus said earlier in **Mt 6:24** <sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

**PICTURE:** walking in two directions – DON'T FORGET. It seemed that this was a problem that was prevalent then, and it certainly is prevalent today... especially in FREE and WEALTHY areas of the world.

### **Matthew 19:27-30 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Jesus’ response to Peter, “everyone who gives up their lives in this life for his names sake? **will receive a hundred-fold that in rewards PLUS eternal life**”

Yes, following Jesus COSTS us everything. But we get way more in return than we give. We get salvation, his Holy Spirit to be with us, purpose, peace, empowerment, freedom from SIN, and we get much more LATER.

But then he warns his disciples, **“many who are first will be last, and the last first.”** He says this twice in the next conversation. **First C.19 v.30:** he was referring to the rich young ruler, who seemed to be FIRST in his outward actions but inwardly was holding onto an idol... Jesus was saying, “this guy looked like he had it all! He would have been your top volunteer, or STAFF person at church! he was BUSY doing good works... but he never really surrendered his heart to me and that was the most important part! So rather than being FIRST based on the outward behaviors! He ended up being last!”

### **A. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard**

The Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of Israel as the vineyard of the Lord (Isaiah 5:1-7 – the vineyard of the Lord is his people; 27:2-11; Jeremiah 12:10-11).

When Jesus spoke of a landowner hiring idle day-laborers for his vineyard, his listeners would have thought of the Lord urging individuals, even those on the margins of society, to join his people which was consistent with what he had already been doing!

- Matthew 8:1-17 Lepers, centurion, the sick and demonic oppressed;
- Matthew 9:10-13 tax collectors – doctor came to heal the sick not those who think they are good enough;
- Matthew 9:20-22 unclean women with a discharge;
- Mathew 9:32-34 mute man with a demon;
- Matthew 11:5 the blind, lepers, deaf hear, dead are raised, poor have good news preached;
- Matthew 12:9-14 man with withered hand;
- Matthew 15:21-31 faith of Canaanite women, heals the sick, crippled, lame;
- Matthew 17:14-21 boy with demon.

### **Matthew 20:1-16 (ESV)**

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his

vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

**PICTURE:** Can you imagine you are working full-time in a salaried position at a bank. You love your job! You agreed to the salary you are being paid. But then you notice the bank also hiring part-time employees – NO BIG DEAL! Perhaps it was an administration position – GREAT! And you are full-time and managing staff and dealing with BIG loans. Also GREAT! Imagine that payday came and the owner decided that EVERYONE – regardless of hours worked, position held, would receive the SAME WAGE!!!! WHAT?!?!?!? Wouldn't this seem unfair?!?!?!?

**Romans 9:14-16 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

**Back to Mt 20...**

But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?'

**Wasn't it fair? Did the people in the story agree to the wage?** The workers hired first knew what they were going to be paid and said, "yes." Why were they upset? Because they felt they had DONE MORE than the other workers and thus, deserved MORE than was agreed upon.

**Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)**

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

**Two things I want us to look at from this parable of the laborers in the vineyard:**

1. What did we learn about God? God does not judge the way we judge. He is faithful to give us what he has promised us. We get far more than we deserve. And he delights in bestowing EXTRA blessings on those whom everyone else deems unworthy – HE LOVES THE LEAST OF THESE.
2. **Personal reflection:** who do we relate to in this story. When you first gave your life to Jesus... we were willing to give EVERYTHING to follow Jesus for the promise of salvation. Is this still enough for you? Or, do you find yourself comparing your life to others and feeling resentful? When you look at what is happening in the world around us... are you still content with the treasure you have been given? When you look at the success of others, are you able to rejoice with them? the wage that was offered to you when you said, "yes" is it still enough? Or, do we begrudge his generosity?

<sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Here we get the **SECOND**: time this phrase is used. Matthew 20:16 helps Bible readers understand there will be many surprises in heaven because heaven’s value system is far different from the earth’s. Those who are esteemed and respected like the rich young ruler may be frowned upon by the Lord. And many of those who were despised and rejected, like Jesus and the disciples, and even as many Christians are treated by the world today, will be given the highest honor and rewards.

**Simply put:** Jesus’ measure of success is ONE THING. Obedience. Doesn’t matter how long you’ve obeyed, or how big the task, or how much it make look like you failed according to earthly standards. What matters is that we respond to him in LOVING OBEDIENCE. SIMPLE. Those who respond to him in this way will receive a GREAT REWARD.

#### **B. Whoever would be FIRST, must become a slave...**

##### **Matthew 20:17-19 (ESV)**

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

Right after explaining how he will reward those who give up everything to follow him, he reminds them, for the third time, of what is about to happen to him. He is modeling to them how he too is GIVING EVERYTHING for the sake of the KINGDOM.

- **PRAISE:** what a GOD WE SERVE!!! He asks for EVERYTHING – but Himself, GAVE EVERYTHING for us!
- **Romans 8:32 (ESV)**  
<sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

##### **Matthew 20:20-28 (ESV)**

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

Right after the parable of the laborers in the vineyard and then Jesus explaining that he too is giving everything, **we have the disciples arguing amongst themselves as to who receives the greatest reward...** ha! SO HUMAN!! These guys should give ALL of us hope! They prove that God doesn’t look at the outside, rather the INSIDE.

But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Again Jesus brings it back... “the upside down Kingdom” YES! You want to lead in the Kingdom? Give up your life for others! you want to be GREAT???? Serve your neighbors. Become like a slave, as JESUS DID... and you will be TRULY RICH.

**Personal Reflection:** As a follower of Jesus, does my life reflect this is how I treat people and use my time and resources? Am I looking for greatness through amassing wealth and position? Or, am I simply loving God and serving others?

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** You may be tempted to think that the rich young ruler was bad because of WEALTH – WRONG! Position and possessions are NOT bad. We should never apologize for living in a wealthy nation. Nor for being born into freedom. BUT – we should take the advantages we have been given and use them to build Christ Kingdom in whatever way that He should ask us to.

### C. Jesus expects fruit in our lives

**Matthew 21** goes on to demonstrate the authority of JESUS THE MESSIAH as he triumphantly enters Jerusalem... this is Sunday... mere DAYS before he is going to be arrested, beaten and killed.

The next part Matthew records differently than Mark, Scholars think Mark had it recorded chronologically.

Jesus curses the fig tree! **Matthew 21:19 (ESV)** <sup>19</sup> And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.

- This is significant! Since the fruit of the fig tree begins to appear about the same time as the leaves (or shortly after), the appearance of leaves in full bloom should have indicated that fruit (even green fruit) was already growing.
- This would have had symbolic meaning! The fig tree symbolized the hypocrisy of all who have the appearance of godliness but are not bearing fruit. Jesus expected those who loved God to BEAR FRUIT.

### **Matthew 21:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

He didn’t just want people coming to the temple! He wanted their hearts!

What kind of fruit is he looking for??? **SIMPLE:** LOVE & OBEDIENCE – love & obey God and love people!

### C. Parable of the Wedding Feast

#### **Matthew 22:1-10 (ESV)**

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed

them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

**Again you see the same picture repeated!** The Father is holding a big feast for his son! So the servants go to gather those who were invited... but they were BUSY doing other things! Taking care of their own lives! They paid no attention to the CALL.

But then look what happens next... we see the heart of God! *"Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good"*

**Revelation 3:20 (ESV)** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

This verse was written to the CHURCH! today – let's give our YES to him. Yes to our hearts. Yes to our lives. Yes to whatever it is that he asks of us. Yes to giving him our everything, even as HE GAVE HIS EVERYTHING for us.

#### **Week 14: Passage of the Week: Matthew 20-21**

##### **MAP Challenge Jesus' call to those who follow him:**

**M** - memorize – PICK a verse from your devotions or the Passage of the Week. Read it, write it, pray it, say it.

**A** – application – Mt 22:1-10 read this in your devotions. "go to the main roads and invite – good & bad – whomever you find" who is someone in your life that needs Jesus? They may be a believer or unbeliever currently. Ask the Lord for a step you can take to encourage them towards Jesus this week. E.g. see if they will share a prayer request with you and then pray for them; encourage them; share something the Lord is doing in your life with them; help them with something they need help with. Whatever you do, see if you can encourage them in their faith.

**P** – pray – pray for the person you are reaching out to & pray the Lord will increase your heart for the lost.

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