

GOLDEN PARACHUTES FOR ALL

(Matthew 20:1-16)

Intro: It doesn't seem right, does it?
-Billion-dollar corporations go bankrupt.
-Employees lose their jobs.
-Stockholders lose their investments.
-CEOs get million-dollar golden parachutes.

It doesn't seem:

- Right.
- Fair.

I. The Kingdom Of Heaven May Not Seem Right To Us, Either.

A. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like A Landowner.

1. Hired people to work in his vineyard.
 - a. 6:00 A.M.
 - b. 9:00 A.M.
 - c. Noon.
 - d. 3:00 P.M.
 - e. 5:00 P.M.
2. He promised.
 - a. To pay the first workers a day's wage.
 - Denarius.
 - b. To pay the rest "what is right."
 - Matthew 20: 4.
3. At the end of the day.
 - a. Those who worked only part of the day.
 - Received a denarius.
 - #Whole day's pay.
 - b. Those who worked all day.
 - From sunup to sundown.
 - #In the heat of the day.
 - Received a denarius.
 - #Day's pay.
 - #Just as they had been promised.
4. Those who had worked all day.
 - a. Grumbled.
 - b. Complained.
 - It didn't seem right.
 - It didn't seem fair.

- B. We Might Be Among The Grumblers.
1. We like to compare ourselves with other people.
 - a. We want what's:
 - Right.
 - Fair.
 - b. But what is:
 - Right.
 - Fair.
 - #For us.
 - #Often depends on:
 - *Our point of view.
 - *Our point of comparison.
 2. After seminary.
 - a. I attended graduate school.
 - Luther Seminary.
 - #St. Paul, Minnesota.
 - I wrote my thesis.
 - I received my Master of Theology degree.
 - #To add to my Master of Divinity degree.
 - b. But then I had to wait a whole year.
 - For the Holy Spirit to surprise me with a call.
 - #Into the pastoral ministry.
 - For ordination.
 - c. During that year I found work through a temporary employment agency.
 - It wasn't the labor pool.
 - #Where you go first thing in the morning.
 - *Sit.
 - *Wait.
 - +Hoping to be assigned a job.
 - #I had done that on other occasions.
 - But with the temp agency.
 - #I knew the evening before.
 - *If I was going to work in the morning.
 - My first job was in a potato chip factory.
 - #Just for a week.
 - #Filling in for someone on vacation.
 - #My job was to change the boxes.
 - *We packaged potato chips for:
 - +Piggly Wiggly.
 - +Red Owl.
 - +IGA.
 - +North Star.
 - *It was all the same potato chip.
 - +Just a different box.

- *Only difference.
 - +Sometimes we ran regular potato chips.
 - +Sometimes we ran ripple chips.
- My next job was in a soap factory.
 - #Not hand soap.
 - *You wouldn't put your hand into this soap.
 - +Without wearing a rubber glove.
 - #Industrial-strength soap.
 - *Sold to the railroads.
 - +Union Pacific.
 - +Burlington Northern.
 - *Used for washing:
 - +Locomotives.
 - +Roundhouse floors.
 - *We would mix up huge tanks of this stuff.
 - +8,000 gallons.
 - +10,000 gallons.
 - *We would pump the soap into:
 - +55-gallon drums.
 - +Tanker truck.
 - #It was a small operation.
 - *Four of us worked there.
 - +Foreman.
 - =Older man.
 - =Retired from another profession.
 - =Worked directly for the owner.
 - +Other three of us.
 - =Worked through the temp agency.
 - =I ended up working there for a year.
 - #I hadn't been working their very long.
 - *I learned the other two temps.
 - +Were making more than I was.
 - =I don't remember how much it was.
 - 15¢/hour.
 - 20¢/hour.
 - *I didn't think that was:
 - +Fair.
 - +Right.
 - *I called the temp agency and grumbled.
 - +Temp agency explained.
 - =During my first:
 - Two weeks. -Four weeks.
- #I was a "probationary" worker.
 - #I received "probationary" pay.

- =It was up to the employer to decide.
- If I should:
 - #Become a "permanent" worker.
 - #Receive a "permanent" worker's pay.
- *So I went in to talk with the owner.
- +I grumbled/I said:
 - = "I'm making this much."
 - = "I understand the other guys are making that much."
 - = "I don't think that's right."
- +He agreed.
 - =I got the extra 15¢ or 20¢/hour.
 - It was a big deal at the time.
 - It only seemed right.
- 3. Now I'm a pastor.
 - a. With 30 years of experience.
 - b. 3-4 weeks ago.
 - Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod.
 - #Sent out its "Guidelines for Pastor's Compensation."
 - *For 2009.
 - It's a graduated pay scale.
 - #Recent seminary graduates make so much.
 - #Those with more years of experience are higher on the scale.
 - That's only right, isn't it?
 - #Experience.
 - #Seniority.
 - #Years of faithful and dedicated service.
 - *Ought to count for something.
 - *Right?
- 4. That's the way it is.
 - a. In the world.
 - b. In the church.
 - What is right.
 - #Can change with our point of view.
 - #Can mean:
 - *What is best for me.
 - When things don't seem right to us.
 - #We grumble.
- 5. Workers in the vineyard.
 - a. Who worked all day.
 - Under the blazing sun.
 - b. Expected:
 - More than the others.
 - More than they got.
 - c. They grumbled.

II. We May Grumble Because We Have The Wrong Point Of View.

A. Parable Of The Vineyard Is About The Landowner.

1. Landowner didn't cheat anyone.
 - a. Landowner paid those who worked all day.
 - Denarius.
 - Day's pay.
 - b. That's what they had agreed to.
 - Before the work began.
2. Landowner did what was right.
 - a. For those who worked part of a day.
 - b. He paid them:
 - Denarius.
 - Day's pay.
 - c. Denarius was like the minimum wage.
 - Anything less.
 - #Would not have been enough for those workers.
 - *To cover a day's living expenses.
 - +For themselves.
 - +For their families.
3. Those who grumbled had an evil eye.
 - a. "Are you envious because I am generous?"
 - Landowner asks.
 - Matthew 20: 15.
 - b. "Is your eye evil because I am good?"
 - Literally what the Greek says.
 - c. Those who worked all day.
 - Saw something good.
 - #Landowner who was generous.
 - *With those who worked only a part of the day.
 - But to them it looked like something bad.
 - #They grumbled:
 - *"These last who worked only one hour,"
 - *"You have made them equal to us."
 - +Matthew 20: 12.
 - They didn't want equality.
 - #They wanted more.
 - Their point of view was:
 - #Narrow.
 - #Self-centered.
 - #Not right.
 - *From the landowner's point of view.
 - They grumbled.
 - #Because their eyes were evil.

B. Do We Have Evil Eyes When It Comes To The Grace Of God?

1. Jonah did.

a. Why did Jonah get so bent out of shape?

-When God decided to spare:

#City.

#People.

*Of Nineveh.

-That was a good thing.

#Wasn't it?

b. Not in Jonah's eyes.

-Jonah grumbled.

#"I knew it!"

#"I knew it!"

#"I knew it!"

*"I knew you were going to do this."

*"That's why I didn't want to come here in the first place."

#"I knew you were: "

*"Gracious."

*"Merciful."

*"Slow to anger."

*"Abounding in steadfast love."

+But those are good things.

=Aren't they?

-Jonah had an evil eye.

#The grace and mercy of God.

*Looked good.

+When Jonah was the recipient.

=He got a second chance.

*Looked bad.

+When Ninevites were the recipients.

#Jonah didn't care about Ninevites.

*Ninevites.

+Mortal enemies.

+Saddam Husseins.

+Osama bin Ladens.

=In Jonah's way of thinking.

#Jonah would have liked nothing better than for God:

*Send in the cruise missiles.

*Blast those suckers off the face of the earth.

+ "Are you jealous because I am generous?"

+ "Is your eye evil because I am good?"

=God might ask Jonah.

=Matthew 20: 15.

2. What about us?

a. God has a golden parachute for everyone who believes.

-Golden parachute.

#Love.

#Mercy.

#Forgiveness.

-Golden parachute.

#Fruit from the vineyard.

#Vineyard itself.

#Kingdom of heaven.

-Golden parachute.

#Landed in our sinful, morally bankrupt world.

#Landed in a manger in Bethlehem.

-Golden parachute.

#Still flying.

#Still floating.

#Still saving.

*Even after Good Friday.

*Even after it was nailed to a cross.

*Even on the third day.

*Even on this day.

b. Golden parachute.

-Looks like a good thing.

#When we are the recipients.

-Does it look just as good?

#When the recipients.

*Not charter members of this congregation.

*Have not:

+Been part of the church.

=As long as we have.

+Volunteered as many hours.

+Donated as many dollars.

+Brought as many groceries.

+Cleaned up after as many potlucks.

=As we have.

*Members of the Holly and Lily Society.

+As Warren Werling calls them.

+C & E Christians.

=Who come only on Christmas and Easter.

*Folks who come:

+Only when they have a problem.

+Only when they need something.

*Folks who don't come at all.

"Are you envious because I am generous?"
"Is your eye evil because I am good?"
* God asks us (Matthew 20:15).

Concl: In the Kingdom of Heaven.
- There is an equality of grace.
Golden parachutes.
* For people like us.
* For people who are not like us.
- It is the grace of God that enables us:
To see without jealous eyes.
To give without jealous hearts.
To serve without jealous hands.
- Golden parachutes for all.

