

Jesus on Fairness and Sovereignty

Matthew 20:1-16

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Psalms 115:3 (ESV)

25 “But you say, ‘The Lord’s way isn’t fair.’ Now listen, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair? Instead, isn’t it your ways that are unfair?

Ezekiel 18:25 (CSB)

The master calls laborers into his vineyard (1-7)

But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Matthew 19:30 (ESV)

1 “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. **2** After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. **3** And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, **4** and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ **5** So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. **6** 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?’ **7** They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’

Matthew 20:1-7 (ESV)

The master rewards the laborers as he sees fit (8-12)

8 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.’ **9** And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. **10** Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. **11** And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, **12** 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.’

Matthew 20:8-12 (ESV)

The master explains he has been just (13-16)

13 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? **14** Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. **15** Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ **16** So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Matthew 20:13-16 (ESV)

God establishes the terms

14 What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! **15** For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **16** So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy.

Rom. 9:14-16 (CSB)

20 On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” **21** Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor?

Rom. 9: 20-21 (CSB)

God continues to call people into his kingdom

20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Cor. 5:20 (NIV)

We have an obligation to do our part