

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*  
*July 12, 2020*  
*“Adequate Performance”*

*Sunday school at 8:30, in-person Services at 9:15 & 10:45 with King's Kids (Video live-taped sermon online later).*

NEWS

Be respectful of others by allowing them to deal with COVID 19 in their own way.  
 Church camp at Little Bitterroot Lake, August 14-16.

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**MATTHEW 19:27-30 ~**

It was never just about wealth. It was always about...

Peter's question was a self-serving, and therefore a \_\_\_\_\_ human question.

Jesus explained that the First, Greatest Commandment is literally true...

Three things promised. 1) A throne of authority 2) Many times as much gained as lost  
 3) Eternal life.

To whom do they apply?

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

“In the regeneration,” is an unusual way to phrase...  
(II Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1).

Why the “Son of Man” title?

(Psalm 110, Daniel 7:13&14, Revelation 1:7, 14:14) & (II Corinthians 5:21, I Corinthians 15:17-20).

In the “Regeneration,” we will be in perfect harmony with God, just as God is in perfect harmony with Himself.

In principle, the Apostles would rule with Him, just as all His disciples will.  
(I Corinthians 6:2&3, Revelation 3:21).

God’s economy is not our economy. Give and you receive back a super over-abundance. Note the principle... Why is it impossible that this is about literally giving away everything you have and living as miserable a life as possible now?

Sacrifice to earn? This is about recognizing realities and properly prioritizing your life accordingly.  
(Philippians 3:7-9, Matthew 6:33, 16:26)

### **MATTHEW 20:1-16 ~**

The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who refuse to fall into the trap of thinking about what they deserve.

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon/Elder

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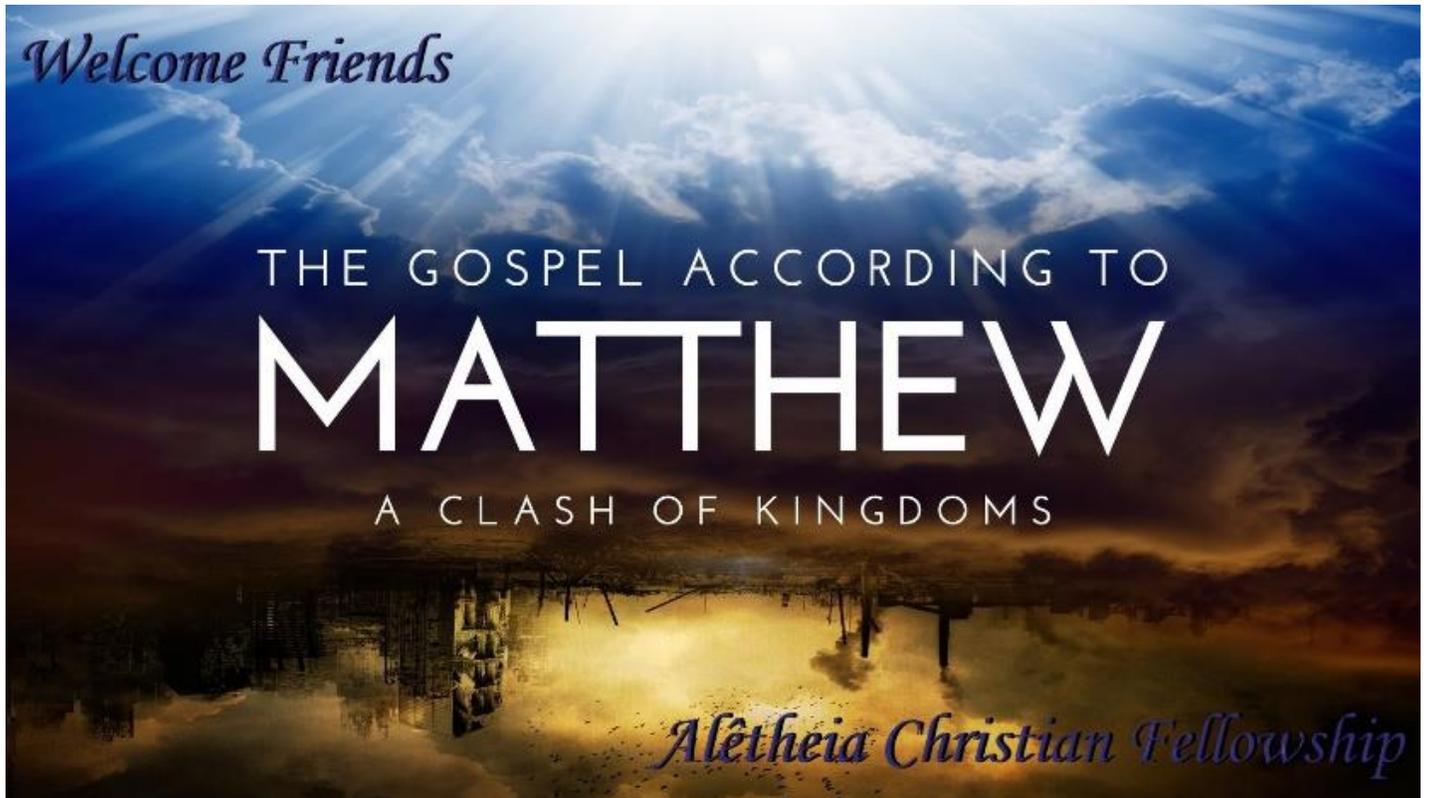


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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 19f ~ 071220  
 “Adequate Performance”



Matthew 19:27-30NASB ~ 27Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” 28And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit

eternal life. 30“But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.

Again, as we saw last week, it was never just about wealth. It was always about “Everything.” In chapter 19 we’ve seen exchanges giving live examples. It was about sexual faithfulness - it was about a humble, but expectant approach to God - it was about putting God first in everything and that’s what Peter indicated... “We have left everything and followed You.” We have put You, Jesus, as the highest priority in our lives and it has cost us... What can we expect in return? What they didn’t know then was just how much more it was going to cost. Every one of the Apostles was brutally murdered. John was supernaturally sustained through his execution, but they all suffered tremendously. By the end, they weren’t doing it for a reward...



The question Peter asked on behalf of the group was self-serving. Therefore, it was an absolutely typical human question...

Even more so when we remember the context. The Rich Young Ruler assumed that he had earned a lot of God's favor and so, really, his question was "What **ADDITIONAL** good thing" can I do, to earn even more favor and thereby, ensure my eternal reward? Self-serving, self-focused, self-concerned. "What can I do to gain a better thing for myself?" Don't we do that? Can you tell me that you don't, at least at times, think that way? It is a typical human preoccupation and therefore a typical human question... "What's in it for me?" If I do

a little extra, how much better will my situation be...  
And the real implication... Is it worth it?

Jesus answered that question and the extra, in the case of the Rich Young Ruler, wasn't worth it. After he went away - not angry, not derisively, not dismissively, but despondently... The Disciples were confused.



Love<sup>the</sup> Lord<sup>your</sup> God  
with all your heart & with all your  
soul & with all your strength  
& with all your mind; & Love  
your neighbor<sup>as</sup> yourself. LUKE 10:27

Jesus explained that the First, Greatest Commandment is literally true... God must be the greatest priority period. Humanly, while that seems so difficult, it's actually impossible and so, it points to the fact, that only God can save anyone... The Disciples, through their leader Peter, basically asked, "What then, does it

take to be saved - to be a Christian?" It shows their continued, erroneous, preoccupation with human performance.

The Rich Young Ruler's question was, "What can I do?" And Peter's question is, "We have already done so much." In both cases, we see the human conception of "Live a good life - go to heaven." Really, the question from both, is, "What's good enough, to get God to pay up?"



There are three things promised. 1) A throne of authority 2) Many times as much gained as lost 3) eternal life.

Most take the first one to apply to the 12 Apostles and the other two to apply to all Saved people.

If you look closely, it could be that all three apply to all Christians. It's possible here, and it is certainly true in a very general way elsewhere, but we can stay with the safer idea that in this place, the first "Reward," belongs to the Apostles... More on this later.



Jesus said, "In the regeneration." It is an unusual way to phrase it, but everyone is agreed that He was indicating the point when everything is formally and finally set right. II Peter 3:13 talks about "New heavens

and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” The Book of Revelation talks about everything made new... Again, a “New heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). It is the end of this world order, forever... “The Regeneration.”

It is that eternity, that Jesus speaks about, and it is easy to see with His choice of words, that He eagerly awaits that perfection. We, His Followers, who understand the implications of that eternity pray for its hastening. Especially with all the pain and suffering and the fear and hatred and the evil and death so obvious all around us.

Nothing has changed - we think the world is coming apart at the seams, but really, human beings have been putting on a blood-soaked horror show since Cain murdered his brother Abel - It's just that now, we insulated modern Americans are getting a better vantage point to see man's inhumanity to man. To better realize that civility is a very thin veneer covering our fear-driven human savagery.

Anyway, in that perfect eternity Jesus, the “Son of Man,” will reign from “His glorious throne” unopposed. What is it when God reigns unopposed? It is none

other than the Kingdom of Heaven. The things I just said are all important. I phrased it the way I did with much care and thought, because every word Jesus spoke has so much meaning.

The “Son of Man” title emphasizes the mortal life that the Word of God lived. It emphasizes His connection with us and His selfless sacrifice on our behalf... It is tangible proof that He has the right to Judge - to rule. He always knew precisely what it was to be human - He didn't need to become one of us to know - He became one of us to prove that He knows. In spite of being tempted in every way, He was perfectly sinless. He earned His spot back in Heaven, but instead of claiming what was His, He allowed the Father to impute sin, my sin, your sin, to Jesus as though it were His sin.



The vile evil things you have thought, said and did were, attributed to “Him Who knew no sin.” Jesus became sin because of it (II Corinthians 5:21). There is only one penalty for sin and that is the thing that sin spawned... Death. Physical death, yes, but more importantly relational, spiritual, eternal death.

Because Jesus was the perfect sacrificial lamb, laying down His life in our place, God was propitiated. It means that God’s perfect righteousness, goodness, integrity, and justice were fully satisfied.

The bodily resurrection is the tangible proof that it worked. It is the single-most important fact in human

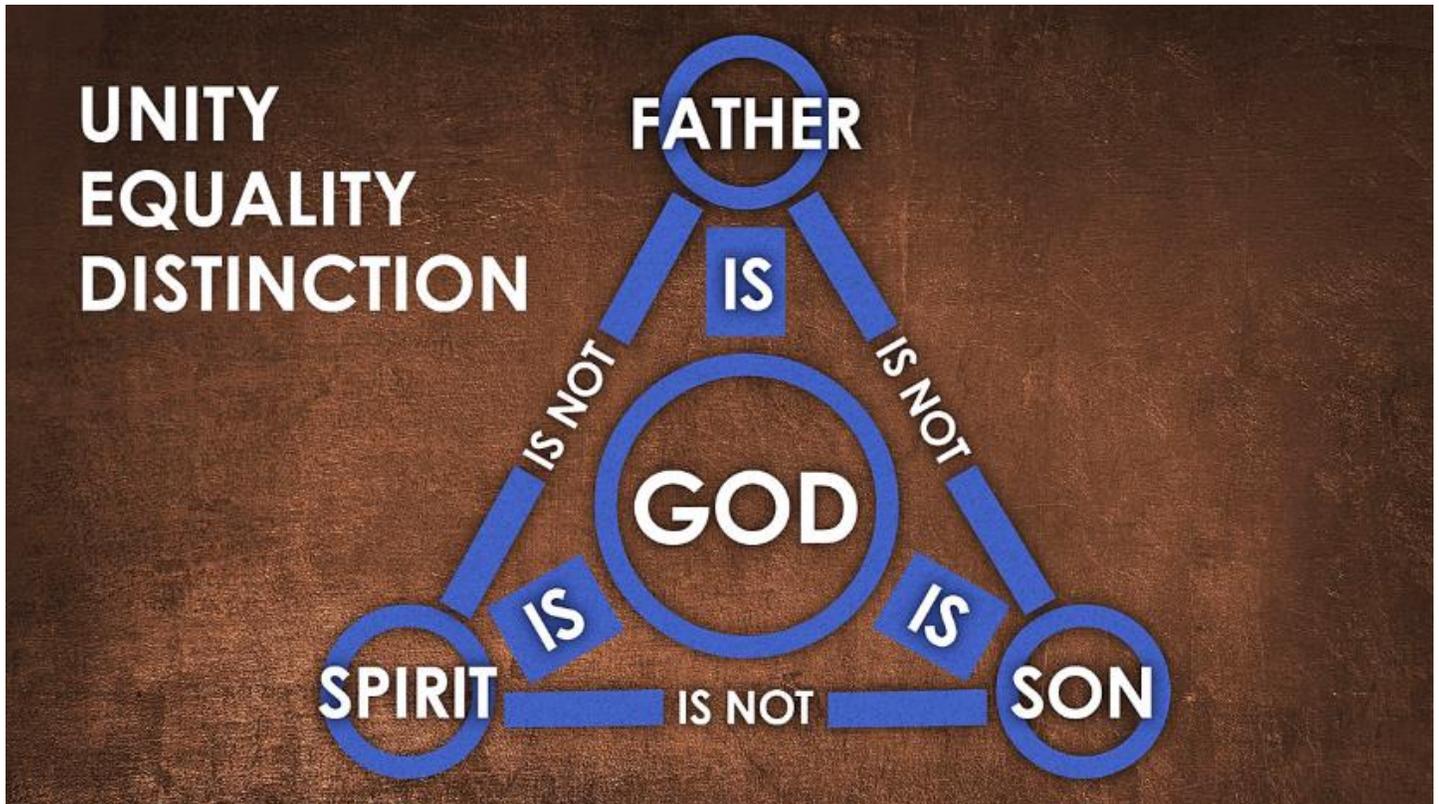
history. It is the linchpin of Christianity. Take away the actual physical bodily Resurrection of Jesus and the implication from it that He conquered death and the grave forevermore and that to do that He had to destroy the power of sin... Take that away and as the Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 15:17-20 MINE ~ 17 If Christ has not been resurrected, your faith is worthless; you are still guilty of your sins. 18 Therefore all those who have already died believing in Christ are lost forever. 19 If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. 20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first of all those believers, who have died.

All of that to simply say that the "Son of Man," has proven to His creation, that He has the right to judge and rule over His creation forevermore.



I keep throwing the words Reign and Rule in there with Judging. Judging is part and parcel to ruling. It isn't that Jesus merely judges each case - He reigns from "His Glorious throne," and that includes judging. Biblically, it means that He is God. Within His reign, coexists the reign of the Father, and the Spirit. The Prophet Daniel said in His Book, 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion

Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one  
Which will not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14NASB).



The Bible can simultaneously talk about each member of the Trinity and their perfectly harmonious overlapping oneness.

Those who are in Christ are simultaneously in the Father and in the Spirit - we generally phrase it in different ways, such as the “Children of the Father” and “Holy Spirit filled people,” but we who are in Christ, must necessarily be in the full Godhead. As such, we will likewise, through Him, judge and reign as well.

Sure, here specifically, the 12 Apostles, will sit on 12 thrones, judging and ruling over the 12 Tribes of Israel, but in a grander sense, all Christians will judge in the reign in God. We are all said to, "Inherit the Kingdom." You don't inherit that which rules over you.

What I mean, is the Kingdom is not God ruling and we humans submitting to Him, in the sense we see in an earthly arrangement... He's not the King making all sorts of decrees throughout eternity and we are all hearing those decrees and then submitting to them. The reason God's reign is unopposed in the Kingdom is because all of the citizens of the Kingdom reign together with God. The King's decrees are our decrees. It is the thing we are trying to do presently... Father Your Will done on earth as it is in Heaven... Is mostly, Father, because of Jesus, and through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit won't You please conform me to You... Won't You please make my will what Your Will is... Let my perspective and attitude, my thoughts, words, and deeds, reflect Yours.

In the "Regeneration," we will be in perfect harmony with God, just as God is in perfect harmony with Himself.

That's cool and at the same time should cause you to think. In true Buddhism (I say true as in original Eastern Buddhism, not the watered down, me first version of the West), the goal is to join the universe, or force, or intelligence and end the cycle of fear and pain. What that means is once enlightened enough you become one with what Carl Jung called the "Collective unconscious." The fundamental difference between that notion and Biblical Christianity is the individuated oneness.

When you join the collective you cease to exist as an individual... It is an annihilation of you and everything you are, in favor of the one. Biblical Christianity teaches us that God is one, but an individuated one. We have a difficult time wrapping our little pee-brains around the concept.

Atheists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, and Jews all love to point out the absurdity of the Trinity. Pee-brains. Because God is three in one, we likewise will be perfectly one with Him in eternity, but will still retain our individuality.

That's how we can be one with Him, and reign with Him, and judge even the angels with Him, and still be

us - always His beloved children, but never actually Him. We will be God in the sense that we are in harmony with Him, but never in the sense that we ourselves usurp His position... If we did, we would be out of harmony, by definition.

Well, you can ruminate on all of that, the real point for today is that the Son of Man ruling as God, in concert with the Father and the Holy Spirit and with every one of us. Specifically, here the mention of the 12 Apostles... Well, guess what... There are only 11 of them who will be there. Do you think for even a moment God didn't know that? Do you think Jesus was mistaken?

I hope you can see a principle, where so many can only see a literal black and white statement of future fact. Because people are unable to see the principle, they either think Jesus knew that Judas would be replaced with Matthias, or that He was wrong. Neither choice is good.

Besides that, later in this Gospel, Jesus confirms that it isn't just Israel, but "All the nations" (Matthew 25:32). The fundamental principle throughout the Bible is that God's children judge and rule with Him... Which of

course means, that there is never even a hint of disagreement, dissension in the ranks or any opposition at all to His perfect Will done.

Jesus was addressed by Peter on behalf of the 12 then and Jesus responded to them... In principle, they would rule with Him, just as all His disciples will. The Bible declares in I Corinthians 6:2&3, that we believers will judge not only the world... We will judge the angels as well. In Revelation 3:21, Jesus said, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

When thought of in that way we don't need to get bogged down in precise details about Israel of old, modern Jews and Christianity - The 12 Tribes simply indicates the people laying claim to God... Is their claim valid? We will decide as we are in full coherence with God.



# SEEK FIRST

MATTHEW 6:33

What else? All who have abandoned the things of this life in favor of following Jesus and existing as the Children of God will receive everything worth anything.

That's a good way to phrase it... God's economy is not our economy. Give away and you receive back a super over-abundance. Give up all your worldly entanglements for Christ's sake and you will receive so much it is incalculable. Not merely in the life to come - in fact, this indicates an immeasurable blessing in the here and now.

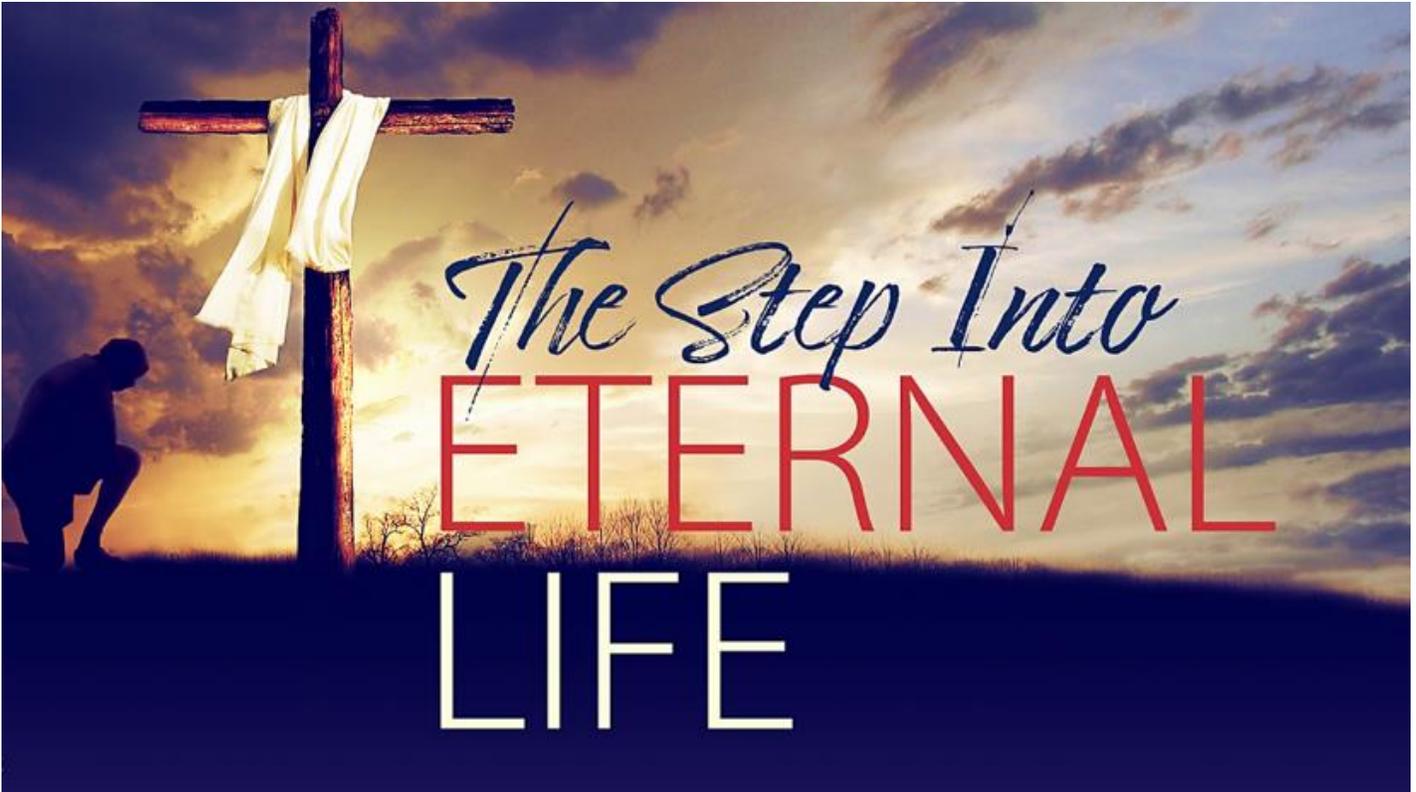
We're not talking the heresy of the prosperity gospel... You can't give \$100 expecting to get \$1,000 in return...

What you can do is give whatever Christ asks you to give - in every area of your life, not to receive, but truly to give. Handing over anything, even everything, simply because He asks WITH the motivation that you want to be, in tune with Him and His purposes. WITH the intent to be used by Him to be a blessing to Him, and to others. WITH the purpose of acknowledging the priceless salvation you've already received - recognizing that it alone is a million times more valuable than all you are, and all you have... WITH that genuine attitude of giving, my friends, you won't be able to count your blessings... Even in this life... Usually, blessings you would have never thought of yourself.

This is not about giving away everything and living as miserably a life as possible now to gain something in the future... This is about recognizing realities and properly prioritizing your life accordingly. As the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:7-9NLT, 7I once thought these things (the things of this life) were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I

could gain Christ and become one with him. I do not even, any longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law (through my human performance); rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. Of course, elsewhere Paul confirms that faith is not something humans manufacture, it is, itself, a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8).

"I believe Lord, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). In comparison to Christ, all else pales. Put Jesus first. Just as He said, "Seek first God's kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven where He reigns in your heart unopposed - His perfect Will done in you - seek that and His righteousness, and all these things both temporal and eternal will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).



Third outcome... Well of course, eternal life. That does not mean living forever. Please understand the difference between eternal life and living forever... The latter is an inability to die, the former, the thing Jesus promises, is to really live forevermore - to live in perfect harmony with God and with all of your fellow saints.

What thing of this life would be worth more than that? As Jesus said back in Matthew 16:26, "What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"

Then Jesus said in verse 30, "Many who are first will be last; and the last, first." This statement ties to Matthew 20:16, "So the last shall be first, and the first

last.” The twin statements create an inclusio, meaning that the first 16 verses of chapter 20 explain further what Jesus means... So, let’s take a look.



Matthew 20:1-16, 1“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2“When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3“And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place; 4and to those he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And so they went. 5“Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing. 6“And about the eleventh hour

he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day long?' 7 "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.' 9 "When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius. 10 "When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 "When they received it, they grumbled at the landowner, 12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.' 13 "But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 'Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?' 16 "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

This is such a great parable - so simple to grasp when we have the proper context and when we don't start reading more into it than Jesus intended.

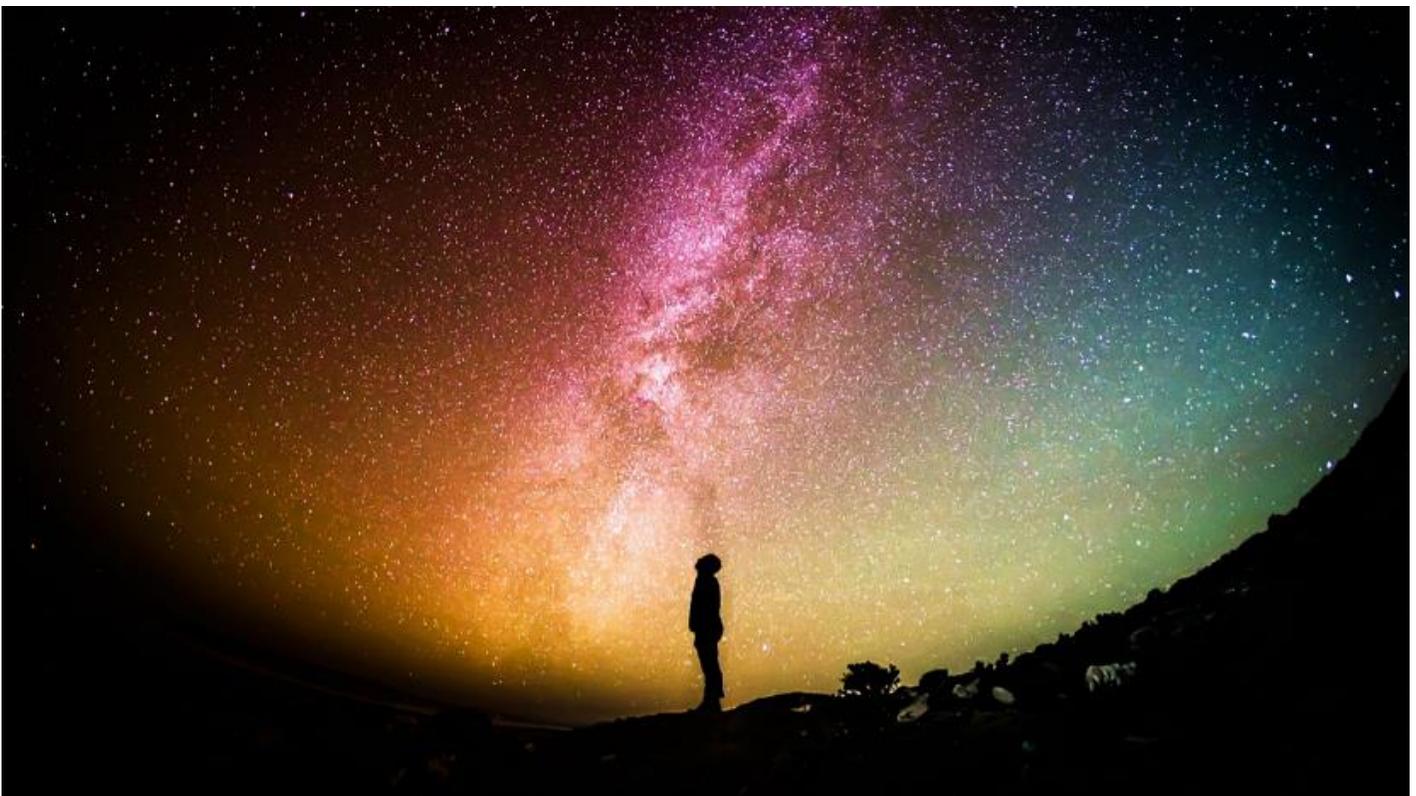
Remember, parables make a single main point. The point in this case, is clear and unmistakable because of the open-ended statement preceding it in 19:30 and the closing of that statement at the end of the parable in 20:16. The overall main point explaining everything happening up to this point, is that reward is not dependent upon human effort, performance, or sacrifice... The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who refuse to fall into the trap of thinking about what they deserve.



*What does she deserve?*

What do you deserve my friends? What does this pious, innocent girl deserve? What does the very best of us deserve? Death, the answer is death - physical,

relational, spiritual, eternal, death. That's what each and every human person deserves. If that, then we can understand that the statement... "You and I, deserve nothing," is a no brainer. Of course, we deserve nothing. Of course, we deserve nothing good, since what we actually deserve - what we've actually earned is the worst bad there can be. Well, human pride rises up and says, certainly, I deserve something, and that is the problem.



It is God Who saves, and He does so according to His extreme generosity. Not only is God unimpressed and unmoved by our worth to Him, He further annoys us by showing it in His generosity. Because we're human it is seen as unfair. One person gives much, serves much,

sacrifices much, suffers much, while another is late to the party and barely invests anything at all into the project, yet both receive the very same reward.

It causes us to grumble - it isn't fair - we deserve more. Here's the interesting bit... That is looking at things from our personal perspective relative to others. The Landowner tells us that we're looking at it from the wrong perspective... We need to look at it from His perspective.

He gave the first group the opportunity to work for a fair and equitable agreed upon amount... He perfectly fulfilled His side of the bargain. The fact that He chooses to bless others with that same reward for less return, is His business. It's between Him and the other workers and has nothing to do with the first workers.

Now we could explore a lot of specifics, talk about how the first group might represent either Israel, or legalistically minded Christians. We could get into a discussion about the idea that at the end of the day everyone went home able to live another day because of the Landowner's concern and generosity to employ everyone at the same rate. To delve further is to lose the primary principle that Jesus was trying to impress

upon His Disciples and upon every interested person since. The questions posed by the Rich Young Ruler and by Peter were looking at the Kingdom and therefore at God wrongly.

God benevolently employs people because He wants to generously bless them, not for the labor they do - He can harvest the fruit of His vineyard with a thought - He doesn't need us for that.

But in His incredible generosity He gives us the opportunity to work. If we are filled with His Holy Spirit, we love Him, and we love others and so the work is a blessing in and of itself.

Rejoice that you were hired early - revel in the fact that you're employed by the King!

