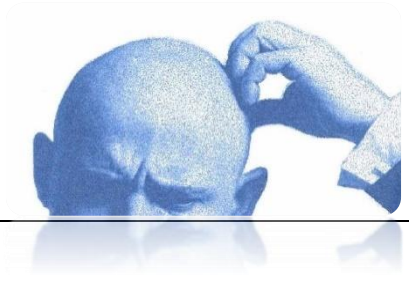


Parable of the Vineyard Worker

Small Group Questions



The following questions are intended to start conversations. Use only the ones your group finds helpful. Explore others as they come up.

Our preaching series during the season of Epiphany will consider various parables of the kingdom (Scandalous Kingdom). Questions will be provided each week to help you think about these stories BEFORE you listen to the sermon. It is our hope that this will encourage your own study and prepare you for the upcoming sermon.

- Describe something in our world that seems unfair. What makes it unfair?
- Imagine hiring three people to help you build a fence. One of them can't start till after lunch, but when the work is done, you pay them all the same. Most of us would consider this wrong. But *why* is this wrong?
- Read **Matthew 20:1-16**. What bothers you about this story?
- In what sense does the grumbling of the first workers mirror Israel's wilderness complaints (e.g. Exodus 16) or other biblical narratives? Were they right to complain?
- Is the vineyard owner allowed to be generous with his money? Does this justify the unfair wages paid to the workers?
- Assuming God is like the vineyard owner, is God unfair?
- What does this reveal about fairness versus generosity?
- Is the vineyard owner's action morally defensible or only theologically defensible? In other words, would Jesus expect this behavior to be imitated socially and economically or is the parable intentionally resisting ethical application?
- What does this parable teach about grace, especially in contrast to cultural assumptions around earning just about everything (wages, marks, approval, etc.)?
- What does this tell us about the kingdom? How might this shape how we live?