

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A
20 September 2026
Isaiah 55:6–9; Philippians 1:20c–24, 27a; Matthew 20:1–16a

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today's Gospel gives us a story that, at first sight, does not seem very fair. A group of workers starts work early in the morning. Others come at midday, some in the afternoon, and some even at the last hour. Yet, at the end of the day, they all receive the same payment. If we were among those who had worked all day, we might say, "Hang on a minute! That doesn't seem fair!" And to be honest, we can understand their complaint.

In our everyday life, we normally expect to be paid according to the work we do. The more hours we work, the more we expect to receive. So, what is Jesus trying to tell us? The first reading gives us the key: **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways, says the Lord."** God does not look at things exactly as we do. We often think in terms of *fairness, comparison and reward*. God looks at us with **mercy, generosity and love**.

The workers who came late were not given less because they were less valuable. The landowner was generous to them. And this is the heart of the Gospel: **God's grace is a gift. It is not something we can earn or demand.**

We sometimes think, "I have been coming to church for forty, fifty or sixty years. I have said my prayers, helped in the parish, supported the Church and tried to live a good life. Surely I deserve more than someone who comes to God at the last moment!" But Jesus reminds us that heaven is not a salary we earn. **It is a gift of God's grace.**

Think about someone who has lived a difficult or sinful life but, towards the end of life, sincerely turns back to God. We might be tempted to say, "Well, that person has had it easy. I have worked hard all these years!" But God says, "My child, you were with me all those years. Everything I gave you was a gift. And now I am also welcoming this person home." That is the generosity of God.

And really, we should be grateful that God is not simply giving us what we deserve. If God dealt with us strictly according to what we deserve, none of us could stand before Him. We are all sinners. We have all made mistakes. We have all needed forgiveness. So, the good news is that **God is generous and merciful.**

There is another important lesson here. We should not compare ourselves with others. Sometimes we look at another person and say, "Why should he get that?" or "Why does she receive so much?" We can easily become jealous or resentful.

Even in the Church, we can fall into this trap. One person may do more work, another may do less. One may come to church every Sunday; another may return after many years. One person may have been involved in the parish for decades, while another has only recently joined us. But at the end of the day, **we are all workers in the same vineyard of the Lord.**

There is no place for jealousy or competition in God's family. We are here to serve, not to compete. And God does not ask us, "How much have you done compared with

somebody else?" He asks us, "**Have you loved me? Have you loved your neighbour? Have you used the gifts I have given you?**" That is what matters.

We see this in our own parish life. Many people quietly give their time, their energy and their talents. Some clean the church, some help with the flowers, music, collections, children's liturgy, food banks, visiting the sick, looking after the grounds, helping at parish events, or simply welcoming people at the door. Some jobs are noticed; many are not. But **God sees every little act of love.**

A kind word can be a great gift. Giving someone a bit of your time can make a real difference when that person is going through a **rough patch**. Sometimes we just need to give someone a **hand**. When somebody says something that hurts us, we can choose not to hold on to it. We can forgive.

When someone really **gets under our skin**, we can try to be patient rather than reacting in anger. And when we have fallen out with someone, perhaps we can take the first step and say, "Let's sort this out." These may seem like small things, but they are exactly the kind of things God asks of us.

My dear friends, the Gospel today invites us to look at life with God's eyes rather than simply with our own eyes. **Do not compare. Do not be jealous. Do not keep a scorecard of what you have done for God or what others have received.**

Instead, be grateful. Everything we have is a gift: our life, our faith, our family, our health, our talents, our friends and even the opportunity to serve God and others.

And perhaps the simplest message to take home today is this: **God is generous with us. Therefore, let us be generous with one another.**

Let us thank God for the years we have been given to serve Him. Let us welcome those who are coming to the Church today, even if they have come late. And let us remember that, in God's vineyard, there is room for everyone.

As Jesus says at the end of today's Gospel: "**The last will be first, and the first, last.**"

May we have the humility to accept God's generosity and the generosity to share that love with others.

Amen.