

Sunday, November 26

Choosing to Live in the Abundance

Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 20:1-16; Mark 9:38-41; Mark 6:38-42;

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.[a]

23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[b] was brought to him.

25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.[c] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 18:21-35

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them a denarius[a] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

3 “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.

4 He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ 5 So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. 6 About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

7 “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

8 “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

9 “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 12 ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

13 “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.

15 Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

16 “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Matthew 20:1-16

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us

38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us.

Mark 9:38-41

Feeding of 5000

38 “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied

Mark 6:38-42

Discussion Questions

- 1) We can see clearly from the passages in Genesis 1 and 2 that God created a world of abundance. In Genesis 3, Satan tempts Adam and Eve and their lens shifts to seeing a world of abundance and plenty to seeing the world through the lens of scarcity. Suddenly there was something missing. Because of their disobedience, we see sin enter into the world.

-In what ways do you see the curse of the ground in Genesis 3:17-19 affecting the world?

- 2) Throughout the book of Exodus, the children of God bear witness to Gods miraculous provision and protection of them as they leave living in enslavement in Egypt and begin walking to the land God has promised for them. Exodus 16 is a great example of the Israelites living in the tension of trusting God and doubting God.

-Where else in Scripture do you see the people of God living in this tension?

-Where in your life have you had moments of being overwhelmed by Gods provision and protection and then struggled with doubt?

- 3) There are several indicators that there may be areas in our life where we are seeing the world and others through the lens of scarcity versus the lens of Gods abundance.

-Of the indicators listed (A lack of generosity, withholding mercy, living with a sense of entitlement, shifting from satisfaction to dissatisfaction through comparison, and setting up lines of division with others and creating a world of those who are for you and those who are enemies), which area do you tend to struggle with the most?

- 4) God has used often bread as a symbol to remind His children that He is a God who cares for us, who is aware of our most immediate needs and who will provide for us.

-What have been symbols in your life that remind you of Gods love and provision for you?