



Paradox
Truth that Breaks the Rules

Paychecks for the Undeserving
Matthew 20:1-16

This Fall we'll be looking at paradoxes that Jesus proclaims—statements that seem absurd or self-contradicting, but when investigated prove to be true. Our pastors will try their best to make clear the complicated paradoxes, and we'll be able to answer our questions and process through them in small groups!

SERMON SUMMARY

¹⁶So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.”

Matthew 20:16

Matthew 19 and 20 are all about God's grace in the Kingdom of heaven. The parable in Matthew 20 is focused on the goodness and generosity of the master (representing God). Out of His goodness and grace have we received eternal life and removing of our guilty standing before God, without ever being able to earn or deserve it.

The Paradox:

Grace is not a **reward** we earn but a **gift** we receive.

- Grace is **surprising**.
 - The workers who worked for one hour got the same pay as the workers who worked for 11 hours!
 - We all deserve death (Romans 6:23) and yet God gives grace to us, the gift of life we do not deserve and cannot earn because of Jesus' sacrifice.
- Grace is **sovereign**.
 - God is able and allowed to give grace to whomever He pleases. The gift of eternal life is not based on what someone deserves or earns.

Diagnose your Heart:

Do you believe that grace is not a reward you earn, but a gift you receive? 4 questions to ask yourself:

- How do you define **greatness**?
- Am I **bitter** because I think God is withholding blessings I deserve?
- Am I **jealous** of good things others have that I want?
- Am I moved to action by the **suffering** of others?

How do we respond?

- We trust Jesus to serve us.
 - Not like a genie we can demand things from, but we can trust Him as He provides what we need.
- We exalt Jesus by servicing others.

DISCUSSION**Reminders for small group leaders:**

- We want everyone to interact with God's Word. Please have Bibles available for students who don't have one. We have a limited amount of Bibles available at church, so remind your people to bring theirs if they have one. **Be sure to open up your Bibles together during small group!**
- Set aside a time to **pray** for each other during every POD. Try not to rush through this time as it's good to have people pray for each other.
- Regularly **recap** how your POD is doing with your co-leaders. Are you meeting your goals? How can you help your people grow in relationship with God and with each other? Is there anyone in your POD who needs encouragement, prayer, or a meeting with one of you this week?
- The teaching happened on Sunday at church. **The purpose of small groups is to ask two questions: 1) What is God saying to me in His Word?, 2) What is He asking me to do in response?** Your role is to help everyone answer these two questions so that God can do His work of transforming hearts and lives.

RECAP with your co-leader/REFLECT by yourself

- *What stood out to you/encouraged you/challenged you, etc from the message?*
- *What is the learning point and/or action point you want the people in your small group to leave with?*
- *How would you summarize the sermon in one or two sentences?*

QUESTIONS

Choose (if any) questions that would be good for your group to discuss, or make up your own!

Getting to know you

- When was a time you received grace that you didn't deserve from someone? Explain. What did it feel like when you were shown grace?
- Have you seen someone else receive grace even though you didn't think they deserved it? What was going through your mind as you saw it happen?

Into the Bible/Application

- **Read Matthew 20:1-16.**

- **Look at verses 9-12.** Put yourself in the shoes of the worker who labored for 11 hours and received the same pay as someone who worked only 1 hour. How would you respond when you received the same pay as the other person who worked less?
- Have you witnessed the same experience on a spiritual level? Can you think of a time when someone didn't think another earned or was worthy of God's grace?
- **Look at verses 14-15.** How do you reconcile or wrap your mind around God's sovereign grace?
 - **Read Romans 6:23.** Recall the story that was told about Jeffrey Dahmer (murderer, rapist, pedophile, cannibal). Do you see yourself just as undeserving of eternal life as him? How did it make you feel when it was said that he became a follower of Jesus in prison, and therefore was given the gift of grace?
 - **Read 1 Timothy 1:12-16.** So good!
- Look at the introspective questions that were mentioned on Sunday. Do you relate to any of the stories/examples that were mentioned along with these questions?
 - Am I bitter because I think God is withholding blessings I deserve?
 - "God owes me because of the way I live, give money, serve, etc for Him."
 - We are not good people...God owes us nothing.
 - *The phrase, "God, you owe me," is predicated upon the belief that grace can be earned.*
 - Am I jealous of good things others have that I want?
 - "Why do they have a bf/gf? Why did they get married so soon? Why do they have well-behaved kids? Why can they afford whatever they want? Etc, etc"
 - *When we are envious of things others have, we fail to remember the ways God has blessed us.*
- Do you believe that the things and opportunities you have are because of your hard work? Has that perspective changed or been challenged after the sermon? How?
- On Sunday it was said, "If all Jesus did was take away the penalty of sin and restore your relationship with your creator and everything else in this life was taken away, you would still be getting more than you deserve."
 - How do you process that?
 - How would you explain this "scandalous" grace to someone else?
 - Does this grace impact the way you live? How?
- After unpacking this parable, how would you describe greatness in the Kingdom of heaven?
- How can you respond to the grace you have received this week?

PRAY

Pray for a heart that sees others the way God sees them; for eyes that see ways to serve others

Pray for a heart that trusts that Jesus will provide what we need, but also that trusts and rests in the grace that we have already received

Thank God for the gift of grace and eternal life...especially since we cannot earn or deserve it!

Pray that God would reveal any jealousy or bitterness that you may have

ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 7, 2018

Week 3/5

College students

Epic this Thursday will be at MU13 at 7:30pm. We'll continue our series on *Misconceptions of Christianity*.

Sign up for **Fall Retreat** at osuepic.com before this Friday for the **early bird prices** (\$30 for freshmen/transfers, \$60 for everyone else). If you sign up on October 12 or after, you'll pay \$70. Fall Retreat will be at Camp Lutherwood; rides will be provided.

There is a tentative **freshmen movie night** on Friday at the Grant gym from 6:30-9pm. Contact Melissa Ibrahim or Sandra Li for more info and check social media.

Men

A men's **camping trip** will be October 19-21 in Astoria. Cost is \$40. If you would like to attend, please email our church office at andrea@grantavebc.org.

All church

Fall Festival at Grant will be on Sunday, October 28 from 4-6pm. This is an event for families with young children! **We need candy donations and volunteers.** If you're interested in volunteering with face painting, games, food, or other activities, email Pastor Bryan at bryan@grantavebc.org. Please drop off candy donations the office by October 24.

The **NWimpact offering** multiplies the partnership of NWBC churches and helps fulfill the Great Commission in our neighborhood and among the nations. Our church raised \$1,650 in the month of September!

If you want to receive the **weekly email newsletter with church announcements/news**, visit <http://www.grantavebc.org/news--events.html> to sign up!