

A Story about Vineyard Workers

20 “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. **2** After agreeing to pay the workers the usual day’s wages, he sent them to work in his vineyard. **3** About 9 a.m. he saw others standing in the marketplace without work. **4** He said to them, ‘Work in my vineyard, and I’ll give you whatever is right.’ So they went.

5 “He went out again about noon and 3 p.m. and did the same thing. **6** About 5 p.m. he went out and found some others standing around. He said to them, ‘Why are you standing here all day long without work?’

7 “ ‘No one has hired us,’ they answered him.

“He said to them, ‘Work in my vineyard.’

8 “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told the supervisor, ‘Call the workers, and give them their wages. Start with the last, and end with the first.’

9 “Those who started working about 5 p.m. came, and each received a day’s wages. **10** When those who had been hired first came, they expected to receive more. But each of them received a day’s wages. **11** Although they took it, they began to protest to the owner. **12** They said, ‘These last workers have worked only one hour. Yet, you’ve treated us all the same, even though we worked hard all day under a blazing sun.’

13 “The owner said to one of them, ‘Friend, I’m not treating you unfairly. Didn’t you agree with me on a day’s wages? **14** Take your money and go! I want to give this last worker as much as I gave you. **15** Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Or do you resent my generosity towards others?’

16 “In this way the last will be first, and the first will be last.”