



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### March 5, 2023

**Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM**

## The laborers in the vineyard

Recap of Sermon from 3/5/23 by Robb McCoy

Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16

The hardest part of every day for me is saying, “That’s enough.” Every day I should be doing all the things. There are devotionals to write, worship to plan, prayers to craft, meetings to schedule, visits to make, graphics to design, podcasts to record, websites to edit, 6 books to read, Scripture to study... My to-do list is never ending. Cross one thing off the top and two things emerge on the bottom. And that doesn’t count the stuff I could be doing at home. The laundry that needs to be put away, the dishes that need to be done, the meals that need to be prepared, the games I could play with my daughters, the conversations with my wife, the walks for the dogs...

Every day at some point I have to say, “That’s enough,” and every day I feel like it wasn’t.

And I read the story of the laborers that Jesus shared and it makes me mad. I want the ones who worked the hardest to have the reward. This is how the world is supposed to operate. This is the good news of American Protestantism: find Jesus, get your life together, work hard to contribute to society, and prosper. We talk a good game about about faith over works, and that may be all well and good for salvation, but on this side of eternity, work is King. It’s not “Live long and prosper” like Star Trek. It’s “Work hard and prosper.”

Then Jesus comes in with this strange parable that challenges everything we think about fairness. Let me be clear, I do not think this parable is a simple allegory. This not a simple formulaic message of landowner=God, first workers=long-time members of the church; late workers=new members. Like most parables, it defies simple

explanation. If it were that simple why would God be participating in this economically depressed system of subsistence living and stratified class structure? The parable is not about what each individual character does, either. The tension in the story, after all, is contrived by the landowner, who seems to go out of his way to stir hard feelings. After all, the tension only comes when the expectations of the early workers are broken.

This parable is no simple allegory, it is a story designed to make us feel something. It is designed to make us check our expectations that are based on a system that some earn their place. It is designed to challenge our notions of fairness, or notions of belonging, and our notions of grace.

Every night the hardest thing for me to do is say, “that’s enough,” because the work day could just keep going. The tasks are never ending, but that is me operating in a system of this world. It is the Kingdom of American Work Ethic that demands me to keep going. It is the Kingdom of our Culture that expects us to “work hard and prosper.” My fear of saying “that’s enough,” is rooted in my fear that I am never ever going to truly do or be enough.

Then Jesus tells this story and says, “You are enough.” Jesus tells this story to a group of disciples arguing over who is greatest, and gently reminds them to check their expectations. This Kingdom of Heaven isn’t going to be like anything you’re used to. It’s a strange kingdom, where every one has their bread for today. It’s a strange kingdom that doesn’t play games of hierarchy or rank. It’s strange kingdom that doesn’t care about your resume or your grades or your titles. It’s a strange kingdom that, instead of being powered by the fear that you aren’t enough, is empowered by the blessed assurance that you are – right now – enough.