



St Hilda's Church Tang Hall York
a Space to Grow



Newsletter 20th September Fifteenth Sunday of Trinity

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Dear Friends,

Last week, we enjoyed virtual 'coffee' outside before we started our worship, and as long as the weather holds, we'll continue to put out 6 chairs for 10.15am so anyone who wishes to do so can socialise in line with Government guidelines, whilst those who wish to have some quiet before the service can also do so inside our building.

This week, we continue with 'The Bible Course' on a Monday evening. We're really learning a lot from one another and it's an enjoyable way of being together.

The current Government guidelines thankfully do not affect churches – we shall continue to keep you updated. We are now cautiously beginning to offer our building for use others whilst maintaining current restrictions, and keeping our building covid secure for all users.

However, I'm pleased to say that we will be able to allow CAB to run a one to one appointment service once a month on a Wednesday. Obviously, we won't be able to be open as we used to be – Sadly we can't run our Community Café or Toddler Group at present.

We are also pleased to welcome Blueberry Academy back shortly to work in our Community Garden on a monthly basis.

I hope you have a good week, and I look forward to seeing some of you either by Zoom, or perhaps face to face around Tang Hall this week.

God's blessings be upon you.

Collect:

Lord God,
defend your Church from all false teaching
and give to your people knowledge of your truth,
that we may enjoy eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Matthew 20.1-16

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 "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."

Reflection by Gavin

what are we worth to other people?

If we ask our families and friends we are worth a great deal to them, not by way of money but in relationships and in love.

But a lot of the time we do consider our worth through the work that we do, or that we did!

Much of our identity and our worth is bound up in the jobs that we do or would like to do.

So the story Jesus tells about workers in a vineyard carries a lot of resonances for us:

it's about identity, it's about our human worth, and it's also about providing for our family.

So who do we identify with in the story?

Might it be the landlord, who is the employer of the workers? Might it be the workers hired at the beginning of the day, bearing the burden of the work and the heat of the day? Or do we see ourselves in one of those groups hired at some point during the day, worried about being left out?

As I take us through the story again put yourself in the shoes of the various groups, and try to feel how it is for them.

It's a normal day in the vineyard there's a whole gang of day labourers up early, looking for work because without it the family will soon go hungry. As usual, there are more people looking for work than there are places, so as a worker you are hoping your reputation for hard work and reliability will get you hired. If you are, you will get the usual daily wage of 1 denarius. And remember, this is just for one day. It's the original zero hours deal.

As the landowner, you are looking for people who will get the job done, not make too much fuss, and keep going through a long day.

And so it goes: these are the workers needed, and So you have been hired - great news!
So you have not been hired - bad news!

The ones who have not been hired hang around, just in case. And they are lucky! The landowner pops into the marketplace, sees the guys hanging around and says go to the vineyard and I'll pay you whatever is right. And the landowner keeps hiring more people, right up to 5 o'clock with just an hour to go. What's going on?

It comes to payment time and everyone has been promised what is right. I reckon there's been some speculation, but everyone knows this is a good landowner who looks after his workers - so it should be OK. And then comes the big surprise: the last workers are paid 1st. They know they will get whatever is right, but even they are surprised that is a whole day's pay. And as everyone who started late in the day gets their denarius the workers hired at the beginning start to think they might get more.

And they don't! They get what they were promised and agreed to and were very happy about at the beginning of the day but now they grumble. It's not fair, we worked really hard and you've given the same to these folk who worked just one hour. You've made them equal to us.

The landowner quite reasonably points out that he has kept his promise to the 1st workers. He has **chosen** to give the same money to the later workers. "I'm free to be **generous** if I want to. Go home and be satisfied!"

This is what it is like in God's way of doing things. God's economy, God's kingdom as we call it, is not always the same as our way of doing things.

So where are we in the story? What are we worth, not just to family and friends, nor to our employers, but to our generous God? I see 2 challenges to us here:

1. can we really accept for ourselves that God's love and generosity are given to us?

When we ask "what are we worth?" it's all too easy to smile outwardly but deep down inside reckon that we are not worthy of God's love and acceptance and generosity.

And at one level that is true: God's love comes to us as a free gift in Jesus but he does seem to think we are worth it! So that's the 1st challenge, God thinks you are worth it! Do you?

The 2nd challenge is, can we really accept for **other** people that God's love and generosity are given to them? I don't just mean the people we know and love: it's not too hard to see them within God's love (well, occasionally they may upset us) but the story takes us beyond the people we find easy to see within God's love Where are you challenged to show love and acceptance and generosity? How are you going to respond?