

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, September, 20th, 2026

Year of Saint Matthew. A.

Gospel As Transaction

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Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

1“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; 4and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. 5When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. 6And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ 7They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ 8When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ 9When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. 10Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ 13But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ 16So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

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Of course , God is free to do as he pleases with Creation, But the killer line here presented by Matthew and his friends is, “Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?” Redemption and Grace are not matters of negotiation and agreement. They are bestowed by God out of the depthless abundance of His Love for all People.

Some Bible students misread this by associating the first hired group with the Jews. They are angry ,these students say, because they have worked longer for the cause of their Lord. God redeems according to his will! It is not rooted in the work or worthiness of the

redeemed. Ultimately all are called as his people. There is no measure, standard, or expectation for inclusion in His Kingdom other than His precious love.

Romans 10:12...

12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him!

11th C BYZANTINE GOSPEL ILLUSTRATION, GOSPEL OF Matthew 11: 1-6

