

Ordinary 25A - 2026

"All I want is my fair share."

In the classic *Charlie Brown Christmas Special*, Sally is writing a letter to Santa Claus and in the process, generates an enormous list of toys she wants. Then at the conclusion of her North Pole-bound missive she writes, *"But if that is too much to carry, just send cash."* When Charlie Brown sees this and despairs over his own sister's greed, Sally indignantly responds, *"All I want is my fair share. All I want is what I have coming to me!"*

Embrace the Sense of Community

There's a play by Timothy Thompson based on this parable in which he depicts two brothers vying for work. John is strong and capable; Philip is just as willing but has lost a hand in an accident. When the landowner comes, John is taken in the first wave of workers, and as he labors in the field, he looks up the lane for some sign of Philip.

Other workers are brought to the field, but Philip is not among them. John is grateful to have the work, but feels empty knowing that Philip is just as needful as he.

Finally, the last group of workers arrive, and Philip is among them. John is relieved to know that Philip will get to work at least one hour. But, as the drama unfolds, and those who came last get paid a full days' wages, John rejoices, knowing that Philip - his brother - will have the money necessary to feed his family.

When it comes his turn to stand before the landowner and receive his pay, instead of complaining as the others, John throws out his hand and says with tears in his eyes, "Thank you, my lord, for what you've done for us today!"

God's justice arises out of a sense of community in which we see the "eleventh hour" workers as our brothers and sisters whose needs are every bit as important as our own.

A mother

A preacher told of a conversation with a mother who understood some of the graciousness that is exemplified in today's parable. She had raised a large number of children on her own. How did she do it? What guidelines could she offer to others in similar circumstances?

She was asked, "I suppose you loved all of your children equally, making sure that you gave all of them exactly the same treatment?" The wise mother replied: "I loved all of them, loved them greatly, but I never wanted to love them equally.

I loved the one who was down until he got up.

I loved the one who was weak until she was strong.

I loved the one that was hurt until he was healed.

I loved the one who was lost until she was found."

It seems to me that grace meets each person's need; not their deserts.

Grace and Generosity

Dr. William Power, a professor at Southern Methodist University, describes an experience he had in Sunday school when he was a boy. His teacher was trying to explain to him and his rowdy friends the meaning of grace, but wasn't getting very far. She tried definitions and abstractions, to no avail. Finally, she realized something the boys had known from the start. She was not connecting. She was not getting through to them. They didn't have the foggiest notion what she was talking about.

So she took a deep breath and tried again: "Look boys, grace is the break you get when you don't deserve it. That's the simple explanation. But you won't really understand it till you experience it." (by James W. Moore from *Some Things Are Too Good Not to Be True*, Dimensions, 1994, p. 95.)