

Sunday Sermon September 20, 2026

“Hey -That’s not fair!” the all-day workers grumble. “You have made them equal to us.” Them and us in today’s Gospel. The all-day workers complain when the one-hour workers receive the same pay. Receive enough to have daily bread.

Several years ago there was a television show called Undercover Boss. The owner of a business would go undercover through elaborate disguises to do the work that his or her employees did to experience what it was like to work in that place.

The highlight of the show was when the boss would get to know their employees and what life was like for them. In one episode, the boss was a franchise owner of a popular fast food restaurant. He put on his disguise and went to work. He was shocked at how difficult it was – the unrelenting orders, the standing all day, the noise, boiling vats of oil, the soul crushing monotony, the crabby customers.

He was trained by a young woman who wanted to continue her education but couldn't because she spent all her money supporting her younger siblings. Her mother had been killed in a tragic accident.

In another episode, the owner of a manufacturing plant joined workers on the line. Again, he was shocked at the pace of the work, the limited breaks, the unforgiving supervisors. The owner talked with a man who couldn’t spend much time with his children because he had a two-hour bus ride, each way.

In another show, a hotel chain owner went undercover to work as a housekeeper. Many of her employees were immigrants working long hours for low pay. She got to know them, the difficulty of their work, their fears about being deported, leaving their children behind...

The shows always ended with the bosses reflecting on how little they knew their employees and the work. Some bosses took concrete steps to help.

The fast food owner paid for the education of the young woman raising her siblings. The manufacturing plant boss bought a car for the guy who rode the bus. The hotel owner used her influence to work for immigration reform. They had their eyes opened as preconceptions were replaced with reality when they heard their employees' stories.

But we can all imagine the other workers in those situations grumbling: "you didn't pay for my education... didn't buy me a car..."

Today's Gospel paints a picture of a common scene in the ancient world, and today. Day laborers hanging out in the town square or at Home Depot waiting for someone to hire them to pick grapes, or tomatoes or oranges. Some are hired at the break of dawn after agreeing to the usual daily wage.

In Jesus' day, that was one denarius, enough – enough for a man to feed his family for a day. Enough to provide "daily bread."

Then throughout the day, the landowner hired more workers, agreeing to pay them what was "right." Note that – what was right, not fair. The landowner ends up hiring some who will only work one hour and receive enough for daily bread.

We might wonder why they could only work an hour. We might immediately assume laziness, but perhaps they were caring for children or an elderly parent. Maybe they were not as physically able as the others. Perhaps they feared the authorities...

It could be that the landowner knew the workers, knew their stories, and responded to them with compassion and generosity. This is how the Kingdom of God works – In God's Kingdom, each and every one is known, cherished and loved.

The landowner pays them all a daily wage, giving them enough to feed their families daily bread. And the all-day workers grumble "you have made them equal to us."

Rev Kellan Day writes this on the danger of **discontent**, he says: “Discontent feasts on the embittered morsels arising from comparison. We struggle to be satisfied when we see those around us with things that we want; we grow envious when we see others living the life we want or experiencing our long-sought dreams.”

“The windows into our neighbors’ lives – through social media and the internet – have amplified this temptation to compare and contrast our lives with others. Does everyone in the world have an updated kitchen and double ovens? Is everyone more fit than me? In a better marriage? Does everyone have a higher income or better health or sturdier faith, or – fill in the blank -

Comparison robs us of our contentment. It holds our gratitude hostage, blinding us to the daily grace before us.”

The all day workers, blind to the daily grace before them. Blind to the power of goodness and generosity. Blind to the Kingdom of God come near– where all are given what is right and just: daily bread.

“You have made them equal to us” they complained, and that is true. Because they are equal. In the Kingdom of God all are equal, all are fed, all are beloved.

Rev Day logically suggests that the antidote to discontent is contentment, which he says is the fruit of gratitude – “of realizing that everything we are and all that we have derives from God.”

“We are beneficiaries of a life and love far beyond us” he says “Contentment realizes that it is God who has given us our breath and limbs and lives. It is God who has placed us in this world with gifts and berries and fireflies. It is God who has bestowed upon us the giggles of children and the smiles of our beloved. It is God who has filled our lives with sufficient grace – with enough for the day.”

May we be content with God’s sufficient grace – with enough for the day.

Amen