



Septuagesima

Third Sunday before Lent

The Collect.

OLORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle 1 Corinthians ix. 24.

BRETHREN. KNOW ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The Gospel St. Matthew xx. 1.

AT THAT TIME JESUS SAID THE kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it,

they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

In Sunday's Epistle Paul gives the vision of the Race. A race which was pre-participation trophies. In which only the winner won the prize. He suggests – though he is vague – that this is not so with God. Jesus is much clearer in Matthew's gospel. He offers the lesson through a parable – a story which answers ONE question. "What is the Kingdom of God like?" Workers – Day labourers – just like those we might find waiting at the local strip mall are hired to pick grapes. All are offered the going day wage. In the end, all are given it. Jealousy rears its ugly head.

Questions:

1. Do you work to have enough or to have as much as you can get?
2. Do you feel satisfied when you have what you need?
- 3 Do you feel better if you have/earn more than your colleague/friend/sibling?
4. What do you teach your children about money and about competition? Against whom, in life, do they compete? What is winning?

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