

# The Labourers in the Vineyard

*Storyteller (picks up the Parable Box):* I wonder what this is?

It is the colour gold. Something inside must be precious like gold.

**Matthew 20:1-16**

As Jesus was telling what the kingdom of heaven would be like, he said:

Early one morning a man went out to hire some workers for his vineyard. After he had agreed to pay them the usual amount for a day's work, he sent them off to his vineyard.

About nine that morning, the man saw some other people standing in the market with nothing to do. 4 He said he would pay them what was fair, if they would work in his vineyard. 5 So they went.

At noon and again about three in the afternoon he returned to the market. And each time he made the same agreement with others who were loafing around with nothing to do.

Finally, about five in the afternoon the man went back and found some others standing there. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?"

"Because no one has hired us," they answered. Then he told them to go work in his vineyard.

That evening the owner of the vineyard told the man in charge of the workers to call them in and give them their money. He also told the man to begin with the ones who were hired last. When the workers arrived, the ones who had been hired at five in the afternoon were given a full day's pay.

1 The workers who had been hired first thought they would be given more than the others. But when they were given the same, they began complaining to the owner of the vineyard. They said, "The ones who were hired last worked for only one hour. But you paid them the same that you did us. And we worked in the hot sun all day long!"

Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are even more precious than gold.

It is closed. *Knock on the lid.* It has a lid. Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are closed; they need to be opened up so we can see what is in them.

The box looks like a present. Parables were given to us long ago as presents. Even if you don't know what a parable is, the parable is already yours. Shall we open it? Let's look inside.

*In turn, take out the sun, the vines, and the denarii. Show them to the children and wonder what they are.*

Jesus said,

The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner, *place the Landowner figure in the middle of the flannel board*, who went out early in the morning *place the sun low on the horizon – about halfway up the board on the right edge of the flannelgraph* to hire workers for his vineyard. *Place the two worker figures in the middle of the flannel board, and the vines over on the left edge of the flannelgraph.* After he agreed with the workers to pay them a denarion, he sent them into his vineyard. *Move the workers over to the left side near the vines.*

*Move the sun up and over about halfway between the edge and the middle of the board.* Then he went out around nine in the morning and saw others standing around the marketplace doing nothing. *Place two more worker figures in the middle of the flannel board.* He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I'll pay you whatever is right.' And they went. *Move the workers over to the left side near the others.*

"Again around noon," *move the sun to the centre top of the board*

**Story Materials**

Parable Box\*\*

Felt figures:

sun

Master

8 workers

vines

eight coins

The owner answered one of them, “Friend, I didn’t cheat you. I paid you exactly what we agreed on. Take your money now and go! What business is it of yours if I want to pay them the same that I paid you? Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Why should you be jealous, if I want to be generous?”

Jesus then said, “So it is. Everyone who is now first will be last, and everyone who is last will be first.”

*and place another worker figure in the middle of the flannel board, “and then at three in the afternoon,” move the sun down and over about halfway between the middle and the left edge of the board and place another worker figure in the middle of the flannel board he did the same thing. Move the workers over to the left side near the others.*

*Around five in the afternoon,” move the sun down and over so it is almost at the left edge, “he went and found others standing around,” place two more worker figures in the middle of the flannel board. “and he said to them, ‘Why are you just standing around here doing nothing all day long? ‘Because nobody has hired us,’ they replied.*

“He responded, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ *Move the workers over to the left side near the others.*

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and moving on finally to the first.’ *Move the landowner over to the right of the board.* When those who were hired at five in the afternoon came, *line up the last two workers right next to the landowner as they are mentioned, in a nice straight line.* each one received a denarion --*put the denarion over each one's head on the flannelgraph . Move the three o'clock and noon workers into line next and put their denarii over their heads. Then move the nine o'clock workers into line and give them their denarii.* Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarion. *Move the first two workers into line and give them their denarii.* When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ‘These who were hired last worked one hour, and they received the same pay as we did even though we had to work the whole day in the hot sun.’

“But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I did you no wrong. Didn’t I agree to pay you a denarion? Take what belongs to you and go. I want to give to this one who was hired last the same as I give to you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you resentful because I’m generous?’ So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last.”