

HOMILY Sept 20, 2026 Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

God's Generosity It's not Fair

Matthew 20. 1-16

A few weeks ago, I was visiting my daughter and was watching my granddaughters play with their toys. Each had a different toy and were playing quietly. Suddenly one of the girls decide she wanted to play with the toy that sister had, and she wanted to play with it **NOW**. The little girl who lost the toy said: "I was playing with that toy. **It's not fair**".

It is very human to want our fair share. We all sometimes fall into thinking that we deserve something. We feel we are entitled to something. Often it is someone's time or attention. Often these wants are valid. We all want clean air, clean water. When we work, we want a fair pay. We want equal opportunities for everyone, men, women, all ages and all backgrounds.

When it comes to gifts from God, we are all equal to receive his generosity. But sometimes we don't think God is being fair. Like the child, we want his attention, his gifts and we don't worry about the other person.

But God is being generous all the time and to a level that is more than enough to meet our needs. We must learn to appreciate God's generosity to ourselves and others. But it is hard. Our human nature and our wired-in ideas of defend and protect can overtake us even subconsciously. We convince ourselves that my needs are more important than the other person.

In the gospel the owner of the vineyard goes into town to hire workers to work on his land. Let's assume it's harvest time. He would have need of a number of workers. In the parable, we have various types of people interacting.

The first of course is the land owner. He represents God. Then there are different worker groups. The first group are those hired in the morning say 6 am. They were told the amount of pay they would receive at the end of the day. The next group is those hired mid day. The next group at 3pm and then 5 pm. They had been there all day because no one hired them. There was no work for them that day. They were unemployed. By the time the last group got to the vineyard the sun was about to set.

When it was time to be paid, the manager of the vineyard paid the ones that worked the shortest time, then the next shortest and so on. Finally, those who worked all day were paid. And, the workers that were there all day were paid. Now out of his generosity the landowner paid everyone the same wage. When the workers that were there all day got paid, they complained that the other workers did less work and got the same pay. And the owner reminded them that they were paid exactly what they agreed to. The landowner was being generous to the other workers.

Why do you think that the landowner did this? He didn't have to. He could have said "you are working less than the first group and I will pay you less". But he did not. I think he realized the needs of the workers and put it first in his mind. For workers, they lived from day to day. If they did not work, they would not eat. That goes for their wives and children also. If they had animals, they could not buy feed for them. If they became ill, no money for medicine. And the most important thing was to give the workers a sense of purpose, a sense of dignity.

God's generosity towards us may seem hidden at times. We too cry out "It's not fair". It happens when we find out we have an illness and everyone else is ok. It happens when we lose our job out of no fault of our own, but others are still working. "It's not fair". It's hidden when a woman becomes a widow young in life and others around her have marriages lasting 50 years. "It's not fair". Am I not entitled to a good life like my friends? Why is their life better than mine? And we often become angry, angry at the world and at God.

So, what does God want us to do in these situations? God wants us to see things from his perspective. He wants us to see how much God gives us. And, everything God gives us comes out of his generosity, His love for us. We cannot do enough to earn God's love. He gives everything to everyone equally. He doesn't love you more than the person beside you. When our hearts are filled with appreciation for God's love and his generosity to us and others, there is only room for gratitude.

It's not easy to understand the goodness of God. on a scale of 1 to 10, it's 1000. Isaiah tells us "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my way says the Lord." The psalmist tells us "The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made".

God wants us to be generous like he is. He wants us to have a generous spirit. We are to give from our abundance. Maybe for you that abundance is time. If so, maybe you can volunteer to help others. If you are talented in a specific area, use those skills for others; maybe music, or leadership. If it is finances, give what you can financially to the Church or other charities. If you have a compassionate heart visit the sick or help those who have lost a loved one. Pray for the graces to be generous to others.

Also try to be content with your situation. My mother taught me that. She had a great saying: She would say to me in Italian: "Piangievo perche non avevo le scarpe; ma quando ho visto uno senza piedi, non piangievo piu". Which means: "I cried because I had no shoes but when I saw someone without feet, I did not cry anymore".

Appreciate God's generosity everyday.