

Devotion by Mike Ho given in a prayer meeting on Wednesday, May 17, 2017

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” Matt 20:16

Matthew 20: 1-16 tells the story of the landowner, whose decision to pay all the workers the same even though some worked only an hour. The first group of workers in the vineyard resented receiving the same wage as the last group. As humans we often look upon this as an unfair labor practice – “How can somebody who worked less be paid the same as another who worked a full day?” Although the



passage in Matt 20 talks about the landowner, it actually deals with eternal life. The message in verse 16, “the last will be first, and the first last,” is that no matter how long or how hard a believer works during his lifetime, the reward of eternal life will be the same given to all - an eternity of bliss in heaven in the presence of God the Father and our Lord Jesus.

As Christians, we should rejoice when others come to the Savior. He is faithful to reward us for our service, and how He rewards others should be of no consequence to us. This is God’s act of mercy, not injustice, whose grace and mercy are shed abundantly upon those of His choosing. He said to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy” (Romans 9:15-16). In the matter of salvation, His grace and mercy are given to those whose self-righteous works could never obtain it. We are all sinful and “fall short of the glory of God”, but His grace is sufficient to redeem all who believe. Whether God calls someone early or late in life to partake of His grace, the glory and praise for our salvation is His and His alone and in no way amounts to unfairness. Just as the landowner has a right to do what he wishes with his own money, so does God have the right to have mercy on whom He will have mercy.