

“Are you envious because I am generous?” Our Lord Jesus poses this question to the disciples under the character of the “landowner” in His Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. Now there’s a real temptation to read this parable *solely* within the context of business ethics and whether or not it’s practically fair to pay the *same amount* of money to the laborers who’ve worked all day versus the laborers who’ve only worked for an hour.

But here’s the thing, this parable has absolutely *nothing* to do with business ethics and so it would be wrong to approach this parable with that interpretive lens. Rather, this parable has *everything* to do with the boundless generosity and goodness of God our Father, Who invites *all* people into His Church.

Essentially, this parable refers to Israel’s labor throughout salvation history and ends with the inclusion of the Gentiles (or non-Jews) in the New Covenant, which is established with the human race through our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. And so despite complaints from the disgruntled laborers in the parable, there’s no violation of justice here. God’s not being unfair to Israel—He’s simply

being generous to the late-coming Gentiles, making them equal members of His people.

Ultimately, this parable is meant to illustrate the richness and the magnitude of God's generosity, which far surpasses anything we could ever imagine. One of the main points of this parable is that God's generosity *isn't confined* by our narrow and fallen human standards. The Lord's infinite goodness, which is expressed through His limitless generosity, simply transcends human reason and goes above and beyond what we fallen creatures might think is "fair." As the first reading from the Book of Isaiah reminds us: *God's ways are not our ways*. And I would add that God's ways are *always better* than our ways.

Contrary to all the popular rumors that are swirling about Him, there is *nothing unjust* about God, and even though it can be tempting, we should never presume to judge Him. *We're all* beneficiaries of the largesse of God's goodness, and the invitation for all to work in His vineyard is a sign of His generosity. And so this parable is meant to convey that the goodness and mercy of God is *the same* for those who

respond to His call *figuratively* at the “eleventh hour” as it is for those who have been with Him and faithful to Him from the beginning.

In the end, God’s generosity towards all of his children should really elicit two responses on our part: 1) Gratitude; 2) The desire to be just as generous as our Heavenly Father is generous. First, gratitude: Our natural disposition towards God our merciful and generous Father, should be one of gratitude. I don’t care if it sounds “corny,” but we need an “attitude of gratitude.” *Everything we are and everything we’ve been given* comes from Him.

As much as I love Thanksgiving, gratitude *should not* be restricted to *one day of the year in November!* We should be grateful to God *every day* of our lives for *everything* He’s done for us and everything He’s given to us! We should be grateful for our very lives, our faith, family, friends, and most especially the gift of salvation through our Savior Jesus Christ—not to mention the roof over our heads, the clothes are on our back, the food on our tables, etc. Do we thank God everyday for what He’s done for us and what He’s given to us?

Brothers and sisters, many times we can become like the disgruntled laborers in today's parable and fall into the trap of constantly comparing ourselves to others, complaining about what others have and *what we don't have*: "they have more money than me, they have a bigger house than me, they have a better body than me, they have better lives than me, they have a better job than me, their kids are doing better than my kids," blah blah blah—we go on and on and on.

Such obsessive, constant comparisons only foster jealousy and envy, which only lead to bitterness and resentment. *And I have no doubt* that things like social media and Facebook, while certainly not evil in and of themselves, can incite and exacerbate such jealousy and envy of others. Brothers and sisters, rather than indulge in self-centered jealousy and envy, we should lovingly and humbly rejoice in the sight of God's generosity *towards us and* those around us. And I'm not talking about measuring God's generosity *purely* in material terms, but rather rejoicing at what God has given to us and what He has given to others. We shouldn't be envious because God is generous—we should be *grateful* because God is generous.

Lastly, our Heavenly Father's boundless and loving generosity *towards us* should inspire us to be *just as generous* towards God and others! *God isn't stingy!* And so as *His* beloved children, *we shouldn't be stingy either!* Rather, as disciples of His beloved Son Jesus, we should be generous with our time, talent, and treasure—with *all* that God has given to us! And for the record, you don't need to be materially wealthy or "loaded with money" to be generous. All you need is a loving and giving heart. In fact, some of the most generous people I know are those who *materially* have very little.

In a few moments, we will encounter our Heavenly Father's greatest Gift to us: His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who *is* our eternal salvation and the answer to all of our prayers. Our Lord Jesus will come into our presence on this altar through the Most Holy Eucharist—and the word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving." As we worship our Lord and Savior, let's *thank Him* for *everything* He's done for us and *everything* He's given to us. And let's ask Him for the grace to be *just as generous* as *He is generous*.