

“TAKE 10”- Worship While Away! (Sunday, September 24, 2017)

Share: Whether we embrace God’s call in our lives or try to avoid it, God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Whether we are long-timers or latecomers in the life of faith, God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Whether our lives in Christ are comfortable or bring hardship, God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Read these words from a hymn today: *For the Fruit of All Creation*

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God. For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God. For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in earth’s safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

For the just reward of labor, God’s will be done. In the help we give our neighbor, God’s will be done. In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, God’s will be done.

Read this scripture from worship: Matthew 20:1-16 (*The Message*)

20¹⁻² “God’s kingdom is like an estate manager who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed on a wage of a dollar a day, and went to work.

³⁻⁵ “Later, about nine o’clock, the manager saw some other men hanging around the town square unemployed. He told them to go to work in his vineyard and he would pay them a fair wage. They went.

⁵⁻⁶ “He did the same thing at noon, and again at three o’clock. At five o’clock he went back and found still others standing around. He said, ‘Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?’

⁷ “They said, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“He told them to go to work in his vineyard.

⁸ “When the day’s work was over, the owner of the vineyard instructed his foreman, ‘Call the workers in and pay them their wages. Start with the last hired and go on to the first.’

⁹⁻¹² “Those hired at five o’clock came up and were each given a dollar. When those who were hired first saw that, they assumed they would get far more. But they got the same, each of them one dollar. Taking the dollar, they groused angrily to the manager, ‘These last workers put in only one easy hour, and you just made them equal to us, who slaved all day under a scorching sun.’

¹³⁻¹⁵ “He replied to the one speaking for the rest, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair. We agreed on the wage of a dollar, didn’t we? So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Are you going to get stingy because I am generous?’

¹⁶ “Here it is again, the Great Reversal: many of the first ending up last, and the last first.”

Talk together, responding to these questions:

- How does this story of God's generosity invite us to think about our own lives?
- When and what has God provided for me?
- How do I feel about God's grace and unconditional love? Regarding me?
Regarding others?
- Am I ever resentful of God's generosity toward the "undeserving?" Can God be unfair?

Pray together: Generous God, you come to us again and again, no matter how late it is in the day or in our lives. Calling to us, gathering us in, you give us your good work to do, daily bread, and boundless grace. Increase in us a generous spirit so that we may do your work with joy alongside others whom you also love. We celebrate your salvation not only in our lives, but also in the lives of other people, even those we had not imagined would be included in the kingdom you are bringing. Align us with your ways and help us receive your gift of justice and mercy as good news. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Bless one another: Make the sign of the CROSS on each other's forehead, saying, "God bless you, and may you bless God today."

Resources Used: *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, Year A*
Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal