

## Service for Week 14<sup>th</sup> -20th Sept 2026

By Chaplain Andy

### **Our Opening Prayer.**

Gracious God, help us to be fully involved in this world and yet to live also in the light of the world to come, and so may our lives witness to your purpose and your saving love and forgiveness.

### **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,

hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive them who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,

the power and the glory

for ever and ever.

### **Amen**

### **Bible Reading Matthew 20:1-16**

*Jesus said* :“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. “About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

“He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ “ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

“The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with

my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

**Holy words, Holy wisdom,**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Reflection**

When we hear this story in our text, that Jesus told, our natural reaction is - that’s very unfair! Some other workers come along to the vineyard later in the day and in the evening they get paid the same as those who had been working there all day. It is not surprising those the men who had worked there all day started grumbling. I am sure that you or I would feel the same way about it.

But Jesus told stories and parables with a moral lesson or to emphasize a spiritual truth. They were recorded in the bible because they had a message both for people living at that time and for us today. Although what the vineyard owner did seems wrong the message from this story very much is that latecomers will be treated the same as those that came first.

I remember especially a man who had come to have faith in God some years earlier but when I met him towards the end of his life he told me that he felt he had not admitted or shared his faith with others. He really felt, although he was very elderly and he was in poor health, that he wished to be baptized in a service to which his

family and friends could be invited. It was especially important to him because he said he had not been baptized as a baby. I was very pleased to be able arrange for him to be baptized with a big service to celebrate and share the occasion.

If you come to faith whenever that is and regardless of how old you may be, even if it is in the last hours of your life, the love, forgiveness and promise of eternal life that God freely offers is yours. This is just the same as for someone who has been devoted to God for many years.

What Jesus is emphasizing in his story about the workers in the vineyard is that when you truly accept God into your life, whenever that is, you will receive forgiveness and your spirit - your soul will be welcomed into an eternal life with God after this one. You don’t need to be baptized or to make any public announcement, it can just be between you and God or through Jesus Christ. But when that time comes, whatever your age, you will want to share the joy and purpose that brings to your life.

**Amen**

**Closing prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, teach me to speak honestly of everything you have done for me in Christ, and so may your love be known to all.

**Amen**

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett