# Gospel of Matthew Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Matthew Chapter 20

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:  Matthew 20 captures Jesus’ ministry as he heads toward Jerusalem and the cross. Matt. 20 is a continuation of Matt. 19, this is obvious by Jesus final word in 19:30 being echoed in 20:16. Matt. 20 includes four stories, two of which have a fascinating parallel (see 20:21 and 20:32). I think the best passage for a YL talk is the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (20:1-16). A parable is a literary tool that attempts to drive home one main point; the point in this parable is this: God’s grace is so great that it offends our human instinct for fairness. Many other lessons can be gleaned from this passage, but this is a story which shows us about God’s gracious character; in YL, we this would be a “person of Christ” talk since it shows us what God is like, what Jesus is like. Here is a outline of the passage:   1. Laborers (20:1-7)    1. Early morning (~6AM) = 12 hours of work (20:2)    2. Third hour (~9AM) = 9 hours of work (20:3-4)    3. Sixth hour (~Noon) = 6 hours of work (20:5)    4. Ninth hour (~3PM) = 3 hours of work (20:6)    5. Eleventh hour (~5PM) = 1 hour of work (20:6-7) 2. Payday (20:8-16)    1. Everyone gets the same pay (20:8-10)    2. Grumbling: This isn’t fair! (20:11-12)    3. The Master: I’m in charge, I keep my word, but I also am generous in a way you don’t understand. (20:13-16) |
| Possible main point(s):   * God’s grace is so great that is offends our human instinct for fairness. Have you accepted the grace Jesus wants to give you? Forgiveness, release of guilt, and blessings are available now: Take a step toward Christ tonight. * Whether you have cared about Jesus for a long time or only for the first time tonight, God’s offer to you is the same: Jesus wants to change your life. * If Jesus was running a business, Jesus would run it into the ground. God is not concerned with an equal transaction when it comes to a relationship with Him, it is all about God’s richness toward us. |
| What this shows us about Jesus:   * Jesus isn’t directly addressed in this passage, but this passage tells us about God’s nature, which is Jesus’ nature. Jesus is full of grace. Grace is a free gift; grace has nothing to do with “earning.” * Jesus is not concerned about offending people who are more concerned with “fairness” than abundant grace. |
| What this has to do with our life:   * Two extremes:   + Best news ever: You need God’s grace in your life. Take it, it is free.   + Worst news ever: You are focused on earning God’s favor. Get used to being frustrated, God doesn’t change. |
| Relevant technical details:   * Kingdom of heaven (v.1) = The way the world is supposed to be. God is working to restore the world to be this way through God’s people. * Denarius (v.2) = One days wages (roughly ~$100 in 2017 in the USA at minimum wage) * 3rd, 6th, 9th, 11th hour = Field work was an all-day job, roughly twelve hours (while it was still light out). Thus, the “hour” represents the twelve hour workday beginning roughly at 6AM. * Grumbled (v.11) = The Greek word is “gong-oozo”... Where we now get the word for “gong.” Pretty annoying! * Begrudge [my generosity] (v.15) = Literally “is your eye bad?” which means in this context “are you blinded [by my generosity]? Matthew’s choice of this word highlights our natural blindness to the depth of God’s grace. * The word “grace” doesn’t appear in the Gospel of Matthew, but the concept is abundant. |
| Possible illustrations:   * Clock / Money: When you start your talk, start a clock/timer on your phone. Every two minutes grab a person from the crowd and have them stand off to your side. At the end of the talk give each person $1 for their help. * A one-sided transaction: [THIS LINK](https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikaandersen/2013/10/04/it-seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time-7-of-the-worst-business-decisions-ever-made/#50ae5fac3e80) has seven of the worst business transactions in history. Example: All merchandising rights to Star Wars was sold for $20,000, it is worth 3 billion dollars. Here is the catch: God knows fully that the deal isn’t equal: grace is a free gift, not a transaction. |

*For more details see ylhelp.com*

Matthew 20 (ESV)

**Laborers in the Vineyard**

**20**“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. **2**After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. **3**And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, **4**and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ **5**So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. **6**And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ **7**They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ **8**And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ **9**And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. **10**Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. **11**And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, **12**saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ **13**But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? **14**Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. **15**Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ **16**So the last will be first, and the first last.”

**Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time**

**17**And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, **18**“See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death **19**and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

**A Mother’s Request**

**20**Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. **21**And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” **22**Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” **23**He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” **24**And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. **25**But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **26**It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, **27**and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, **28**even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Jesus Heals Two Blind Men**

**29**And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. **30**And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” **31**The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” **32**And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” **33**They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” **34**And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.