# CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

# BIBLE STUDY

# Matthew Chapter 20 — The Parable of the Vineyard, True Greatness, and Healing the Blind

## A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

### Introduction

Matthew Chapter 19 ended with a surprising saying:

**“Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”**

Matthew Chapter 20 begins with a parable that explains it.

A landowner hires workers for his vineyard.

Some start early in the morning.

Some start at nine.

Some at noon.

Some at three.

And some just one hour before sunset.

At the end of the day, everyone receives the same pay.

The workers who started first are angry.

But the landowner says:

**“Are you envious because I am generous?”**

This parable teaches that God's grace is not earned.

It is a gift.

And God is free to be generous to whomever He chooses.

Then Jesus tells His disciples for the third time that He will die in Jerusalem.

This time, He gives more detail than ever.

He will be condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified.

And on the third day, He will be raised.

But right after this, the mother of James and John asks Jesus for a favor.

She wants her sons to have the highest places in His kingdom.

The other disciples are angry.

So Jesus teaches them what true greatness looks like.

**“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”**

And He points to Himself:

**“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

The chapter ends with two blind men by the road.

They cry out for mercy.

The crowd tells them to be quiet.

But they shout louder.

And Jesus stops, has compassion on them, and opens their eyes.

Matthew 20 therefore teaches two great truths:

**God's grace is generous and cannot be earned.**

And:

**True greatness in God's kingdom is found in serving, just as Jesus served.**

The central truth of Matthew 20 is:

**God gives His grace generously to all who come, and Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom, calls His followers to find greatness in humble service.**

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# I. A LANDOWNER HIRES WORKERS

## Matthew 20:1 — Early in the Morning

**“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.”**

Jesus began a parable.

**The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner.**

In the story, the landowner represents God.

He **went out early in the morning.**

The workday usually began at sunrise, about six in the morning.

He went **to hire workers for his vineyard.**

In the Old Testament, Israel was often pictured as God's vineyard.

At harvest time, extra workers were needed to gather the grapes before the rains came.

### Cross References

**Isaiah 5:1**

> Now I will sing a song to my friend about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a hill with very rich soil.

**Matthew 9:37**

> Jesus said to His followers, “There are many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers to help harvest them.”

**1 Corinthians 3:9**

> We are workers together for God, and you are like God's field.

### Spiritual Principle

**God goes out to call people into His work.**

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# II. A DENARIUS FOR THE DAY

## Matthew 20:2 — An Agreement

**“He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.”**

The landowner **agreed to pay them a denarius for the day.**

A **denarius** was a silver coin.

It was the normal wage for a full day's work.

It was enough to feed a family for a day.

The first workers made an agreement.

They knew exactly what they would receive.

### Cross References

**Leviticus 19:13**

> Do not cheat your neighbor or rob him. Do not keep a hired worker's pay all night until morning.

**James 5:4**

> The pay you did not give the workers who mowed your fields cries out against you.

**Colossians 4:1**

> Masters, give what is good and fair to your slaves. Remember that you have a Master in heaven.

### Spiritual Principle

**God is always fair and keeps His word.**

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# III. STANDING IN THE MARKETPLACE

## Matthew 20:3 — Nine in the Morning

**“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.”**

**About nine in the morning**, the landowner went out again.

The **marketplace** was where workers waited to be hired for the day.

He saw others **standing... doing nothing.**

They were not lazy.

They simply had not been hired yet.

### Cross References

**Ecclesiastes 9:10**

> Whatever work you do, do your best.

**Matthew 20:7**

> They answered, “No one gave us a job.” The man said to them, “Then you can go and work in my vineyard.”

**Romans 12:11**

> Do not be lazy but work hard. Serve the Lord with all your heart.

### Spiritual Principle

**God keeps calling people into His work throughout the day.**

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# IV. WHATEVER IS RIGHT

## Matthew 20:4 — So They Went

**“He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.”**

The landowner invited them.

**“You also go and work in my vineyard.”**

This time, he did not name an amount.

He said, **“I will pay you whatever is right.”**

These workers trusted the landowner.

They did not bargain.

**So they went.**

### Cross References

**Colossians 3:23**

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if you were working for the Lord and not for people.

**Hebrews 6:10**

> God is fair. He will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for Him.

**Ruth 2:12**

> May the LORD reward you for all you have done. May you be paid in full by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for protection.

### Spiritual Principle

**Those who trust God's goodness do not need to bargain with Him.**

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# V. NOON AND THREE O'CLOCK

## Matthew 20:5 — The Same Thing

**“He went out again about noon and three in the afternoon and did the same thing.”**

The landowner kept going out.

**About noon.**

**About three in the afternoon.**

Each time, he hired more workers.

He did not stop looking for people.

He kept inviting them into his vineyard.

### Cross References

**John 9:4**

> While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

**Galatians 6:9**

> We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time if we do not give up.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1**

> There is a time for everything, and everything on earth has its special season.

### Spiritual Principle

**God's invitation keeps going out to more and more people.**

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# VI. FIVE IN THE AFTERNOON

## Matthew 20:6 — Why Have You Been Standing Here?

**“About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?’”**

**About five in the afternoon**, the landowner went out one more time.

The workday ended at about six.

Only one hour was left.

Most employers would not hire anyone this late.

But this landowner did.

He found **still others standing around.**

He asked:

**“Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?”**

### Cross References

**Proverbs 6:9**

> How long will you lie there, you lazy person? When will you get up from sleeping?

**1 Thessalonians 5:6**

> So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be awake and have self-control.

**John 9:4**

> While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

### Spiritual Principle

**It is never too late to answer God's call while there is still time.**

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# VII. NO ONE HAS HIRED US

## Matthew 20:7 — You Also Go

**“‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’”**

Their answer was simple and sad.

**“Because no one has hired us.”**

They wanted to work.

But no one wanted them.

Perhaps they were older.

Perhaps they were weaker.

Perhaps they were overlooked.

But the landowner wanted them.

**“You also go and work in my vineyard.”**

This is a picture of God's grace.

He calls people the world has passed by.

### Cross References

**Ezekiel 34:6**

> My sheep wandered over all the mountains and hills. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

**Matthew 9:36**

> When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**Romans 10:14**

> But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in Him. And before they can believe in Him, they must hear about Him.

### Spiritual Principle

**God calls those whom no one else has called.**

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**When the world says, “No one wants you,” God says, “You also go.”**

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# VIII. PAYING THE WORKERS

## Matthew 20:8 — Beginning with the Last

**“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.’”**

**When evening came**, it was time to pay the workers.

The Law of Moses required that day workers be paid at the end of each day.

They needed the money to buy food for their families.

Then the owner gave a surprising instruction.

**Beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.**

The last would be paid first.

And the first would see what the last received.

### Cross References

**Deuteronomy 24:15**

> Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and depends on it.

**Leviticus 19:13**

> Do not keep a hired worker's pay all night until morning.

**Matthew 20:16**

> So those who are last now will be first in the future, and those who are first now will be last in the future.

### Spiritual Principle

**God's way of doing things often reverses ours.**

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# IX. A FULL DAY'S PAY

## Matthew 20:9 — Each Received a Denarius

**“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius.”**

The workers who were hired at five o'clock came forward.

They had worked only one hour.

And **each received a denarius.**

A full day's pay.

They did not earn it.

It was a gift.

This is a picture of salvation.

God does not give us what we earn.

He gives us what we need, by His grace.

### Cross References

**Romans 6:23**

> The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Ephesians 2:8**

> I mean that you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God.

**Titus 3:5**

> He saved us because of His mercy, not because of good deeds we did to be right with Him.

### Spiritual Principle

**Salvation is a gift of grace, not a wage we earn.**

### Key Truth

The thief on the cross came to Jesus in the last hour of his life — and received the same eternal life as those who served for years.

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# X. THEY EXPECTED MORE

## Matthew 20:10 — But 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.”**

The workers who were hired first watched what happened.

They saw the one-hour workers get a full day's pay.

So **they expected to receive more.**

If the last workers got a denarius, surely they would get more.

**But each one of them also received a denarius.**

Exactly what they agreed to.

Exactly what was fair.

But not what they expected.

### Cross References

**Matthew 19:30**

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future.

**Luke 15:29**

> The older son said to his father, “I have served you like a slave for many years and have always obeyed your commands. But you never gave me even a young goat to have a party with my friends.”

**1 Corinthians 4:7**

> Who says you are better than others? What do you have that was not given to you?

### Spiritual Principle

**Comparing ourselves to others steals our joy in God's goodness.**

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# XI. THEY COMPLAINED

## Matthew 20:11 — Against the Landowner

**“When they received it, they began to complain against the landowner.”**

They received exactly what they were promised.

But **they began to complain.**

They grumbled against the landowner.

Complaining is often the result of comparing.

They were not unhappy with their pay until they saw what others received.

### Cross References

**Exodus 16:2**

> Then the whole community of Israel complained to Moses and Aaron in the desert.

**1 Corinthians 10:10**

> Do not complain as some of them did — and they were killed by the angel that destroys.

**Philippians 2:14**

> Do everything without complaining or arguing.

### Spiritual Warning

**Complaining reveals a heart that has forgotten God's goodness.**

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# XII. WE BORE THE HEAT OF THE DAY

## Matthew 20:12 — You Made Them Equal to Us

**“‘These 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.’”**

Their complaint was clear.

**“These who were hired last worked only one hour.”**

**“You have made them equal to us.”**

**“We have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.”**

They had worked hard.

They had worked in the hot sun.

They felt they deserved more.

Their problem was not that they were treated unfairly.

It was that others were treated generously.

### Cross References

**Genesis 31:40**

> In the daytime the heat wore me out, and at night the cold kept me from sleeping.

**Matthew 11:30**

> The work I ask you to accept is easy. The load I give you to carry is light.

**Isaiah 4:6**

> It will be a shelter from the heat of the day, and a place of safety from the storm and rain.

### Spiritual Principle

**Grace offends those who think they have earned more than others.**

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# XIII. FRIEND, I AM NOT UNFAIR

## Matthew 20:13 — Didn't You Agree?

**“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?’”**

The landowner answered one of them.

He called him **“Friend.”**

He was not harsh.

**“I am not being unfair to you.”**

**“Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?”**

The worker received exactly what he agreed to.

No one cheated him.

God is never unfair.

### Cross References

**Deuteronomy 32:4**

> He is the Rock, and His works are perfect, and all His ways are right. He is a faithful God who does no wrong, who is right and fair.

**Job 34:10**

> God would never do evil. The Almighty would never do wrong.

**Romans 9:14**

> So what should we say about this? Is God unfair? In no way.

### Spiritual Principle

**God is never unfair, even when He is generous to others.**

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# XIV. I WANT TO GIVE THE SAME

## Matthew 20:14 — Take Your Pay and Go

**“Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.”**

**“Take your pay and go.”**

Be content with what you received.

**“I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.”**

The key word is **want.**

The landowner chose to be generous.

It was his decision.

God's grace is not based on what we deserve.

It is based on His generous heart.

### Cross References

**Romans 5:15**

> But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin... the grace from God and the gift that came through the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, were much greater.

**Luke 15:31**

> The father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.”

**Ephesians 2:4**

> But God's mercy is great, and He loved us very much.

### Spiritual Principle

**God's generosity flows from His heart, not from our performance.**

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# XV. ENVIOUS BECAUSE I AM GENEROUS?

## Matthew 20:15 — My Own Money

**“Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?”**

The landowner asked two questions.

**“Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money?”**

It was his money.

He could give it as he chose.

God has the right to give His grace as He chooses.

**“Or are you envious because I am generous?”**

Literally, the Greek says, **“Is your eye evil because I am good?”**

The real problem was envy.

The first workers were upset not because they were cheated, but because someone else was blessed.

This parable was a warning for the disciples.

Peter had just asked, **“What will there be for us?”**

Jesus warned them not to become proud or envious of others in the kingdom.

### Cross References

**Romans 9:20**

> You are only human, and human beings have no right to question God.

**Proverbs 23:6**

> Don't eat the food of a selfish person or want his fine food.

**Genesis 4:5**

> But God did not accept Cain and his offering. So Cain became very angry and looked unhappy.

### Spiritual Warning

**Envy cannot celebrate when God is good to others.**

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**The problem was not that the landowner was unfair, but that he was generous — and some hearts cannot stand grace given to others.**

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# XVI. THE LAST WILL BE FIRST

## Matthew 20:16 — And the First Will Be Last

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

Jesus ended the parable with the same saying He used at the end of Matthew 19.

**The last will be first.**

**The first will be last.**

In God's kingdom, those who think they deserve the most may find themselves at the end.

And those who know they deserve nothing receive everything by grace.

This was a warning to the religious leaders who thought they were first.

And it was a comfort to the outcasts, sinners, and Gentiles who came to God late.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:31**

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future.

**Luke 13:30**

> There are those who are last now who will be first in the future.

**Matthew 23:12**

> Whoever makes himself great will be made humble. Whoever makes himself humble will be made great.

### Spiritual Principle

**God's grace turns human rankings upside down.**

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# XVII. GOING UP TO JERUSALEM

## Matthew 20:17 — Jesus Took the Twelve Aside

**“Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, He took the Twelve aside and said to them,”**

**Jesus was going up to Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem was on a high hill, so people always spoke of going **up** to it.

Jesus knew what was waiting for Him there.

Mark tells us Jesus was walking ahead of them.

The disciples were amazed and afraid.

**He took the Twelve aside.**

He wanted to tell them privately what was about to happen.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:32**

> Jesus and the people with Him were on the road to Jerusalem, and Jesus was leading the way. His followers were amazed, but others who followed were afraid.

**Luke 9:51**

> When the time was coming near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, He made up His mind to go to Jerusalem.

**Luke 18:31**

> Then Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and said to them, “We are going to Jerusalem. Everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen.”

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus walked toward the cross with determination.**

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# XVIII. CONDEMNED TO DEATH

## Matthew 20:18 — Delivered to the Chief Priests

**“We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death”**

This is the third time Jesus predicted His death.

And this time, He gave the most detail.

**The Son of Man will be delivered over.**

He would be betrayed.

**To the chief priests and the teachers of the law.**

The religious leaders of Israel.

**They will condemn Him to death.**

His own people's leaders would sentence Him.

### Cross References

**Matthew 16:21**

> From that time on Jesus began telling His followers that He must go to Jerusalem, where the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law would make Him suffer many things.

**Isaiah 53:3**

> He was hated and rejected by people. He had much pain and suffering.

**Mark 9:31**

> The Son of Man will be handed over to people, and they will kill Him.

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus knew every detail of His suffering and went anyway.**

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# XIX. MOCKED, FLOGGED, AND CRUCIFIED

## Matthew 20:19 — Raised on the Third Day

**“and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified. On the third day He will be raised to life!”**

Jesus continued.

**They will hand Him over to the Gentiles.**

The Jewish leaders did not have the power to carry out the death penalty.

So they would hand Jesus over to the Romans.

**To be mocked.**

**Flogged.**

**Crucified.**

This is the first time in Matthew that Jesus says He will be **crucified.**

Crucifixion was the most painful and shameful death in the Roman world.

But again, Jesus ended with victory.

**On the third day He will be raised to life!**

### Cross References

**Isaiah 50:6**

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out My beard. I did not hide My face when they insulted Me and spit on Me.

**Psalm 22:16**

> Evil people have surrounded Me... They have pierced My hands and feet.

**Hosea 6:2**

> In two days He will give us new life. On the third day He will raise us up so that we may live in His presence.

### Spiritual Principle

**The cross is never the end of the story; the resurrection always follows.**

### Key Truth

Every detail Jesus predicted came true.

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# XX. A MOTHER'S REQUEST

## Matthew 20:20 — Kneeling Before Jesus

**“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of Him.”**

Right after Jesus spoke about His suffering, something surprising happened.

**The mother of Zebedee's sons** came to Jesus.

Her sons were **James and John.**

She may have been **Salome**, who is named among the women at the cross.

Some believe she was the sister of Jesus' mother, Mary, which would make James and John Jesus' cousins.

She came **with her sons.**

She knelt and **asked a favor.**

Mark tells us James and John asked this themselves.

They likely came together.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:35**

> Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want to ask You to do something for us.”

**1 Kings 1:16**

> Bathsheba bowed down before the king. He asked, “What do you want?”

**Matthew 27:56**

> Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were there.

### Spiritual Principle

**Even good parents can seek the wrong things for their children.**

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# XXI. YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR LEFT

## Matthew 20:21 — In Your Kingdom

**“‘What is it you want?’ He asked. She said, ‘Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your kingdom.’”**

Jesus asked:

**“What is it you want?”**

She asked for the highest places in His kingdom.

**One at Your right.**

**One at Your left.**

These were the places of greatest honor and power next to a king.

She believed Jesus would be King.

That shows faith.

But she was thinking of an earthly throne.

And she was asking for her sons to be above the others.

Jesus had just said He would be crucified.

And they were thinking about thrones.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:37**

> They answered, “Let one of us sit at Your right side and one of us sit at Your left side in Your glory in Your kingdom.”

**Matthew 19:28**

> When the Son of Man sits on His great throne, you who followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.

**Psalm 110:1**

> The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit by Me at My right side until I put Your enemies under Your control.”

### Spiritual Warning

**It is possible to follow Jesus and still be thinking about our own glory.**

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# XXII. CAN YOU DRINK THE CUP?

## Matthew 20:22 — “We Can”

**“Jesus said, ‘You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?’ ‘We can,’ they answered.”**

Jesus answered:

**“You don't know what you are asking.”**

They did not understand what it would cost to be close to Jesus in His kingdom.

**“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”**

In the Old Testament, a **cup** was often a picture of suffering and God's judgment.

Jesus' cup was the cross.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He would pray, **“Let this cup pass from Me.”**

They answered quickly:

**“We can.”**

They were confident.

But they did not understand.

A few days later, when Jesus was arrested, they would run away.

### Cross References

**Matthew 26:39**

> He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, do not give Me this cup of suffering. But do what You want, not what I want.”

**John 18:11**

> Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back. Shouldn't I drink the cup the Father gave Me?”

**Isaiah 51:17**

> Wake up! Wake up! Get up, Jerusalem. You have drunk from the cup of the LORD's anger.

### Spiritual Principle

**The path to glory goes through suffering.**

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# XXIII. YOU WILL DRINK FROM MY CUP

## Matthew 20:23 — Prepared by My Father

**“Jesus said to them, ‘You will indeed drink from My cup, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.’”**

Jesus told them:

**“You will indeed drink from My cup.”**

They would suffer for Him.

**James** became the first of the twelve apostles to die for his faith.

King Herod Agrippa had him killed with a sword.

**John** lived a long life but suffered persecution and was exiled to the island of Patmos.

Then Jesus said:

**“To sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant.”**

**“These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.”**

Jesus humbly submitted to the Father's plan.

The Father decides who receives these honors.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:40**

> But I cannot choose who will sit at My right or My left. Those places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.

**Acts 12:2**

> He ordered that James, the brother of John, be killed with a sword.

**Matthew 25:34**

> Then the King will say to the people on His right, “Come, My Father has given you His blessing. Receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made.”

### Spiritual Principle

**Rewards in God's kingdom are given by the Father, not grabbed by us.**

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# XXIV. THE TEN WERE INDIGNANT

## Matthew 20:24 — Angry with the Brothers

**“When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.”**

The other ten disciples heard about it.

And **they were indignant.**

They were angry.

Why?

Probably not because James and John were wrong to seek greatness.

But because they wanted those places for themselves.

They had the same pride.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:41**

> When the other ten followers heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.

**Genesis 37:11**

> Joseph's brothers were jealous of him.

**Luke 22:24**

> The apostles also began to argue about which one of them was the most important.

### Spiritual Warning

**Pride in others often reveals the same pride in us.**

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# XXV. THE RULERS OF THE GENTILES

## Matthew 20:25 — Lording It Over Them

**“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.’”**

Jesus **called them together.**

He did not scold just James and John.

He taught all twelve.

**The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.**

Rulers in the world use their power to control people.

**Their high officials exercise authority over them.**

In the world, greatness means being on top.

Giving orders.

Being served.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:42**

> Jesus called them together and said, “The non-Jewish people have rulers. You know that those rulers love to show their power over the people.”

**Luke 22:25**

> Jesus said to them, “The kings of the world rule over their people, and those who have authority over others like to be called ‘friends of the people.’”

**1 Peter 5:3**

> Do not be like a ruler over people you are responsible for, but be good examples to them.

### Spiritual Principle

**The world's idea of greatness is power over others.**

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# XXVI. NOT SO WITH YOU

## Matthew 20:26 — Become a Servant

**“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,”**

**“Not so with you.”**

These are some of the most important words Jesus spoke to His followers.

God's kingdom is different.

**Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.**

Greatness in God's kingdom is not about how many people serve you.

It is about how many people you serve.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:43**

> But it should not be that way among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant.

**Matthew 23:11**

> Whoever serves you as a servant is the greatest among you.

**Galatians 5:13**

> Serve each other with love.

### Spiritual Principle

**In God's kingdom, greatness is measured by service.**

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**The world asks, “How many people serve you?” God asks, “How many people do you serve?”**

---

# XXVII. FIRST MUST BE A SLAVE

## Matthew 20:27 — Your Slave

**“and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—”**

Jesus went even further.

**Whoever wants to be first must be your slave.**

A **servant** might work for wages.

A **slave** gave up all rights.

He lived completely for his master.

Jesus was calling His followers to give themselves completely to serving others.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:44**

> Whoever wants to become first among you must serve all of you like a slave.

**Matthew 18:4**

> The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.

**1 Corinthians 9:19**

> I am free and belong to no one. But I make myself a slave to all people to win as many as I can.

### Spiritual Principle

**The highest place in God's kingdom belongs to the lowest servant.**

---

# XXVIII. A RANSOM FOR MANY

## Matthew 20:28 — Not to Be Served, but to Serve

**“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible.

Jesus pointed to Himself as the example.

**The Son of Man did not come to be served.**

He is the King of kings.

He deserved to be served.

**But to serve.**

He washed feet.

He healed the sick.

He touched lepers.

He fed the hungry.

**And to give His life as a ransom for many.**

A **ransom** was the price paid to set a slave or prisoner free.

Jesus would pay the price for our freedom.

With His own life.

We were slaves to sin.

Jesus gave His life to set us free.

**For many** means for all who believe in Him.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:45**

> In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many people.

**Isaiah 53:10**

> But it was the LORD who decided to crush Him and make Him suffer... He offered His life as a sacrifice for sin.

**1 Timothy 2:6**

> He gave Himself as a payment to free all people.

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus' greatness is shown most clearly in His sacrifice.**

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**The greatest One who ever lived became the greatest servant who ever lived — and paid the greatest price ever paid.**

---

# XXIX. LEAVING JERICHO

## Matthew 20:29 — A Large Crowd

**“As Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him.”**

**Jericho** was about fifteen miles from Jerusalem.

It was the last major town on the road to Jerusalem.

It was the same city whose walls fell in Joshua's day.

Many people were traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover.

**A large crowd followed Him.**

### Cross References

**Mark 10:46**

> Then they came to the town of Jericho. As Jesus was leaving there with His followers and a great many people, a blind man named Bartimaeus was sitting by the road.

**Luke 18:35**

> As Jesus was coming near the city of Jericho, there was a blind man sitting beside the road, begging.

**Joshua 6:1**

> The people of Jericho were afraid because the Israelites were near. So they closed the city gates and guarded them.

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus kept ministering to people on His way to the cross.**

---

# XXX. TWO BLIND MEN

## Matthew 20:30 — “Lord, Son of David, Have Mercy on Us!”

**“Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’”**

**Two blind men** were sitting by the road.

Mark and Luke focus on one of them, **Bartimaeus.**

Matthew tells us there were two.

They could not see.

But they **heard that Jesus was going by.**

This might be their only chance.

So they **shouted.**

**“Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”**

**Son of David** is a title for the Messiah.

These blind men saw who Jesus was more clearly than many who could see.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:47**

> When he heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

**Luke 18:38**

> The blind man shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

**Matthew 9:27**

> As Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed Him. They cried out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

### Spiritual Principle

**Recognize the opportunity when Jesus passes by.**

---

# XXXI. THEY SHOUTED LOUDER

## Matthew 20:31 — The Crowd Rebuked Them

**“The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’”**

**The crowd rebuked them.**

They **told them to be quiet.**

The crowd thought they were a bother.

Jesus was too important to be stopped by blind beggars.

**But they shouted all the louder.**

They would not be silenced.

They knew Jesus was their only hope.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:48**

> Many people warned the blind man to be quiet, but he shouted even more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

**Luke 18:39**

> The people in front scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more.

**Matthew 15:23**

> But Jesus did not answer the woman. So His followers came to Jesus and begged Him, “Tell the woman to go away. She is following us and shouting.”

### Spiritual Principle

**Do not let anyone silence your cry to Jesus.**

### Application

People may try to silence our cry to Jesus through:

- Discouragement.
- Embarrassment.
- Criticism.
- Busyness.
- Doubt.

Like the blind men, keep crying out.

---

# XXXII. JESUS STOPPED

## Matthew 20:32 — What Do You Want Me to Do?

**“Jesus stopped and called them. ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ He asked.”**

**Jesus stopped.**

He was on His way to Jerusalem.

On His way to the cross.

With a large crowd following.

But He stopped for two blind beggars.

**He called them.**

Then He asked:

**“What do you want Me to do for you?”**

This is the same question He asked the mother of James and John.

She asked for power and position.

These men asked for mercy.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:49**

> Jesus stopped and said, “Tell the man to come here.” So they called the blind man, saying, “Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you.”

**Luke 18:41**

> Jesus asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

**John 5:6**

> When Jesus saw the man and knew that he had been sick for such a long time, Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be well?”

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus is never too busy to stop for those who cry out to Him.**

### Key Truth

The same question — “What do you want?” — revealed a request for glory and a request for mercy.

---

# XXXIII. WE WANT OUR EYES OPENED

## Matthew 20:33 — “Lord”

**“‘Lord,’ they answered, ‘we want our eyes to be opened.’”**

Their answer was simple.

**“Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.”**

They knew exactly what they needed.

They did not ask for money.

They asked for sight.

Isaiah had promised that when the Messiah came, the eyes of the blind would be opened.

### Cross References

**Isaiah 35:5**

> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

**Mark 10:51**

> Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man answered, “Teacher, I want to see.”

**John 9:25**

> He answered, “I do not know if He is a sinner. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see.”

### Spiritual Principle

**Ask Jesus for what you truly need.**

# XXXIV. THEY FOLLOWED HIM

## Matthew 20:34 — Immediately They Received Their Sight

**“Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed Him.”**

**Jesus had compassion on them.**

His heart was moved.

**He touched their eyes.**

**Immediately they received their sight.**

And then they did the best thing they could do.

**They followed Him.**

They followed Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.

On the road to the cross.

The disciples were arguing about who would be greatest.

The blind men simply followed.

### Cross References

**Mark 10:52**

> Jesus said, “Go, you are healed because you believed.” At once the man could see, and he followed Jesus on the road.

**Luke 18:43**

> At once the man was able to see, and he followed Jesus, thanking God. All the people who saw this praised God.

**Matthew 9:29**

> Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, “Because you believe I can make you see, it will happen.”

### Spiritual Principle

**Those whose eyes Jesus opens will follow Him.**

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**The disciples could see but were blind to true greatness; the blind men received sight and followed Jesus.**

---

# XXXV. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 20

## 1. God's Grace Is Generous

The parable of the vineyard shows that salvation is not earned by hours of labor but given by God's kindness.

### Principle:

**God gives what we need, not what we earn.**

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## 2. God's Rewards Are Equal and Fair

The last will be first and the first last, overturning human ideas of status.

### Principle:

**Never be envious when God is generous to others.**

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## 3. Jesus Faced the Cross Willingly

He clearly predicted His betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection.

### Principle:

**Jesus knew the cost and paid it anyway.**

---

## 4. True Greatness Is Servanthood

In God's kingdom, greatness comes not from authority but from humility and service.

### Principle:

**The way up in God's kingdom is down.**

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## 5. Jesus Came to Serve

He gave His life as a ransom to free us from sin.

### Principle:

**We are free because Jesus paid the price.**

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## 6. Faith Cries Out for Mercy

The blind men's persistent plea moved Jesus, and their faith was rewarded with healing.

### Principle:

**Keep crying out to Jesus, no matter who tells you to be quiet.**

---

# XXXVI. THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

## The Early Workers

- Hired at six in the morning.
- Agreed to a denarius.
- Worked all day in the heat.
- Received exactly what they agreed to.
- Complained when others received the same.

## The Late Workers

- Hired at five in the afternoon.
- No one else had hired them.
- Worked only one hour.
- Received a full day's pay.
- Received grace, not wages.

## The Landowner

- Kept going out to call workers.
- Was fair to the first.
- Was generous to the last.
- Had the right to do what he wanted with his own money.

### Key Truth

**Salvation is not about how long we have worked but about how generous God is.**

---

# XXXVII. TWO REQUESTS, ONE QUESTION

Jesus asked the same question twice in Matthew 20.

**“What do you want?”**

## The Mother of James and John

- Asked for positions of power.
- Wanted her sons to be above others.
- Did not understand the cost.
- Was told the places belong to the Father to give.

## The Two Blind Men

- Asked for mercy.
- Wanted their eyes to be opened.
- Knew exactly what they needed.
- Received their sight and followed Jesus.

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**What we ask Jesus for reveals what is in our hearts.**

---

# XXXVIII. THE WORLD'S GREATNESS AND GOD'S GREATNESS

## The World's Greatness

- Being served.
- Having power over others.
- Being first.
- Giving orders.
- Holding on to rights.

## God's Greatness

- Serving others.
- Using power to help others.
- Being willing to be last.
- Following Jesus' example.
- Giving up rights for others.

### Spiritual Principle

**Jesus redefined greatness by washing feet and carrying a cross.**

---

# XXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 20 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 20 presents Jesus as:

## The Revealer of God's Generosity

He reveals God's generous grace.

## The One Who Calls the Overlooked

He calls those no one else has hired.

## The Suffering Messiah

He would be condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified.

## The Risen Lord

He would be raised on the third day.

## The One Who Drank the Cup

He took on the suffering that was ours.

## The Humble Son

He submitted to the Father's plan.

## The Servant King

He came not to be served, but to serve.

## The Ransom

He gave His life to set us free.

## The Son of David

The blind men recognized Him.

## The Compassionate Healer

He stopped, touched, and healed.

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

**The Jesus who stopped for two blind beggars on His way to the cross is the Jesus who stops for us.**

---

# XL. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

## Question 1

**What does the parable of the workers in the vineyard teach?**

It teaches that God's grace is generous and cannot be earned.

Salvation is a gift, not a wage.

## Question 2

**What was a denarius?**

A silver coin that was the normal pay for a full day's work.

## Question 3

**Why did the landowner pay the last workers first?**

So that the first workers would see what the last received.

It showed that God's kingdom reverses human expectations.

# Question 4

**Were the first workers treated unfairly?**

No.

They received exactly what they agreed to.

The landowner was fair to them and generous to others.

# Question 5

**What was the real problem with the first workers?**

They were envious.

They were not upset because they were cheated, but because others were blessed.

# Question 6

**What does “the last will be first, and the first will be last” mean?**

In God's kingdom, those who think they deserve the most may be last, and those who come by grace may be first.

# Question 7

**What new details did Jesus give in His third prediction of His death?**

He said He would be handed over to the Gentiles, mocked, flogged, and crucified, and raised on the third day.

# Question 8

**What did the mother of James and John ask for?**

She asked that her sons sit at Jesus' right and left in His kingdom — the places of greatest honor.

# Question 9

**What was the cup Jesus spoke about?**

The cup of suffering — His death on the cross.

# Question 10

**Did James and John drink from Jesus' cup?**

Yes.

James was the first apostle to be killed for his faith.

John suffered persecution and exile.

# Question 11

**How did Jesus define greatness?**

Whoever wants to be great must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave.

# Question 12

**What is a ransom?**

A price paid to set a slave or prisoner free.

Jesus gave His life to set us free from sin.

# Question 13

**Why did the crowd try to silence the blind men?**

They thought the blind men were a bother and that Jesus was too important to stop for them.

# Question 14

**What did the blind men do after they were healed?**

They followed Jesus.

# Question 15

**What should Matthew 20 change about the way Christians live today?**

Matthew 20 should cause believers to live:

- Grateful for God's generous grace.
- Celebrating when God blesses others.
- Not envious or comparing.
- Remembering Jesus' suffering and resurrection.
- Seeking to serve, not to be served.
- Using any position to help others.
- Following Jesus' example of humility.
- Crying out to Jesus with persistent faith.
- Following Jesus wherever He leads.

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# XLI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 20 asks several important questions.

### Do I Think I Have Earned God's Favor?

### Do I Celebrate When God Is Generous to Others?

### Am I Comparing My Blessings to Someone Else's?

### Have I Been Complaining Against God?

### Am I Envious Because God Is Good to Others?

### Do I Remember What Jesus Suffered for Me?

### Am I Seeking Position and Power, or Seeking to Serve?

### Do I Understand the Cost of Following Jesus?

### Whom Can I Serve This Week?

### Am I Living Like the Servant King?

### Is Anyone Trying to Silence My Cry to Jesus?

### What Do I Want Jesus to Do for Me?

### Am I Following Him?

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# XLII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

### “Not So with You”

The disciples lived in a world where greatness meant power.

Kings ruled over people.

Officials gave orders.

The great were served by the small.

James and John wanted that kind of greatness.

The other ten wanted it too.

But Jesus said three powerful words:

**“Not so with you.”**

In His kingdom, things are different.

The great serve.

The first become slaves.

And the King Himself came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom.

This creates a powerful principle.

Followers of Jesus must not measure greatness the way the world does.

We must measure it the way Jesus lived it.

By serving.

By giving.

By laying down our lives for others.

### Principle:

**The world's question is, “Who will serve me?” Jesus' question is, “Whom can I serve?”**

---

# XLIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 20 begins in a vineyard and ends on a dusty road outside Jericho.

In the vineyard, a generous landowner keeps going out to call workers.

At the end of the day, he gives everyone the same pay.

The first workers complain.

But the landowner says:

**“Are you envious because I am generous?”**

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus tells His disciples for the third time that He will suffer, die, and rise again.

But a mother asks for thrones for her sons.

The disciples argue about who will be greatest.

And Jesus says:

**“Not so with you.”**

The greatest must be the servant.

The first must be the slave.

Just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Then, outside Jericho, two blind men cry out.

The crowd tells them to be quiet.

But Jesus stops.

He has compassion.

He touches their eyes.

And they follow Him.

Matthew 20 therefore reminds us:

God's grace is a gift, not a wage.

We should never be envious when God is generous to others.

Jesus willingly walked to the cross.

True greatness is found in serving.

And Jesus still stops for those who cry out to Him.

The story of Matthew 20 does not end with:

**Grumbling workers.**

**Arguing disciples.**

**Or a crowd telling beggars to be quiet.**

It ends with:

**A Servant King who gave His life as a ransom.**

**And two men with opened eyes following Him.**

The same call still stands:

Rejoice in God's grace.

Celebrate His generosity to others.

Remember His sacrifice.

Serve instead of seeking to be served.

Cry out to Him for mercy.

Follow Him.

And until He returns:

**Keep serving.**

**Keep rejoicing in His grace.**

**Keep crying out to Him.**

**Keep following Him.**

---

# Closing Prayer

**Heavenly Father,**

Thank You for Your generous grace.

Thank You that You keep going out to call people into Your kingdom.

Thank You that You called us, even when no one else wanted us.

Forgive us for thinking we have earned Your favor.

Forgive us for comparing our blessings to the blessings of others.

Forgive us for complaining when You are generous to someone else.

Take away envy from our hearts.

Teach us to celebrate when others receive Your grace.

Lord Jesus, thank You for walking willingly to Jerusalem.

Thank You for being betrayed, condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified for us.

Thank You that on the third day You were raised to life.

Forgive us for seeking our own glory.

Forgive us for wanting to be first and to be served.

Help us understand the cup You drank for us.

Teach us that greatness in Your kingdom is found in serving.

Help us hear Your words: “Not so with you.”

Make us servants like You.

Thank You that You did not come to be served, but to serve.

Thank You for giving Your life as a ransom for many.

Thank You for setting us free.

Son of David, have mercy on us.

Open our eyes to see You clearly.

Do not let anyone silence our cry to You.

And when You open our eyes, help us follow You wherever You lead.

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**

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# Key Verse

**“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28**

## Central Truth

**God gives His grace generously to all who come, and Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom, calls His followers to find greatness in humble service.**

## Matthew 20 in One Sentence

**Jesus tells a parable showing that God's grace is generous and cannot be earned, predicts His suffering, death, and resurrection for the third time, teaches His disciples that true greatness comes through serving as He came to serve and give His life as a ransom, and opens the eyes of two blind men who then follow Him.**