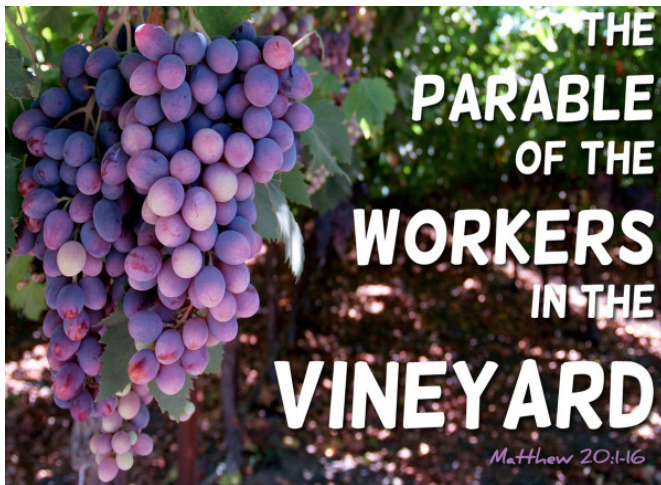




Week 7

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.



Read Matthew 20:1-16

This is the seventh study in the series on The Kingdom of God. Time and time again Jesus told parables revealing something of what the Kingdom of God is like. We have had five short parables giving us pictures about the kingdom. This is now the second of the different kinds of parable, short but full blown little stories that seem simple but that teach us a little bit more. These insights are like an interlocking mesh of ideas that woven together create a rich fabric of understanding as to the depth and complexity of what the Kingdom of God is like and what it means for us as citizens of the Kingdom to live as God's people in our day and generation.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. If you had to sum up the Gospel in one word, would you choose the word 'justice'? For some, this encapsulates the cross and resurrection and God's heart for everything he has created. God is a God of justice. Scripture clearly reveals this part of God's character – see Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 9:8,9,16; 11:7; 97:2.
2. We are called to seek to bring the justice of God's Kingdom here on earth – see Micah 6:8; Amos 5:24; Isaiah 1:17. In Matthew 6:33, quoting Isaiah, Jesus is described as the One who '*will proclaim justice to the nations... [and] lead justice to victory*'. In some versions Matthew 6:33 states we are to '*seek first God's kingdom and his justice.*' One of the Five Core Values of a Gospel People (as published by the BU) is to be a Prophetic People called to follow Jesus in confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy and challenge worldly concepts of wealth, power, status and security. This forms part of our Covenant Service each year – to challenge powers that oppress and corrupt. What does this mean for us practically on a day by day basis? How can we challenge powers that oppress and corrupt? What does God's justice look like in our community? How can we be channels of God's justice to the people of our villages? What does it mean for you personally?
3. Read Proverbs 31:8,9 and James 2:1-17. What insights do these passages give us as to how God wants us to live in his kingdom?
4. Now come to the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. What is your immediate response to this parable? Does this fly in the face of our ideas of what is fair and just? Does it run contrary to the justice of God and his kingdom? What are your thoughts about verse 12. Was the man right in his reaction to his pay?
5. Look at verses 13-15. What do you think Jesus is wanting us to know? What do you think is meant by verse 16?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 9: 6-11, John 10:10, Luke 6:38 and Ephesians 3:19,20 and reflect on the generosity and abundance of God.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Salvation is the free gift of God. It is by grace through faith. Grace is described as the unearned, undeserved, unmerited favour of God. It has been said that God's grace is free, but it's not cheap. It cost Jesus his life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer described cheap grace as grace without discipleship. Is God's grace cheap or costly to you?