

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 119

The Perean Ministry ~ Part 13

In our last post, we have been following **Yeshua** as He left **Yerushalayim** to go to **Perea**. In this post, we come to the end of **His Perean Ministry** as **He Concludes Teaching in Parables**.

The Parable of the Vineyard Workers

Many of **Yeshua's** parables describe the **Kingdom of Heaven**. He uses experiences common to the people of His day to help them understand the coming and growth of the **Kingdom**. I am forever grateful that I had the opportunity to work on my Grandfather's date and citrus ranches in the Coachella Valley of California while completing my college degrees. It taught me so much about working under scorching heat to bring in a crop. On one ranch, there was even a vineyard of table grapes. But he had let it go fallow due to the low rate of return.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who went out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard.

In **Isra'el**, a landowner typically woke early in the morning and went to the marketplace, where day laborers gathered. (I've seen that myself when I went to Home Depot early.) He would select a few workers to tend his fields or harvest his crops and pay them their wages at the end of the day. In the parable, the owner returns to the marketplace every few hours to hire more workers.

² After agreeing with the workers on a wage of one denarius [the standard daily wage,] he sent them off to his vineyard. ³ Then, on going out at about nine in the morning, he saw more men standing around in the market square doing nothing, ⁴ and said to them, 'You go to the vineyard too - I'll pay you a fair wage.' So they went.

These day laborers probably assumed they would be paid less because of their late start.

⁵ At noon, and again around three in the afternoon, he did the same thing.

The owner adds even more workers at midday and midafternoon, even though they will only put in a partial day's work.

⁶ About an hour before sundown, he went out, found still others standing around, and asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day, doing nothing?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' 'You too,' he told them, 'go to the vineyard.'

The fact that the owner recruited workers this late in the day might indicate the urgency of the harvest (compare Mattityahu 9:37–38). It also shows the desperation of these workers who have been waiting all day for someone to hire them.

⁸ "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last ones hired and ending with the first.'

According to the law, hired workers had to be paid at the end of the day (see Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:15). ***Starting with the last ones hired and ending with the first.*** This wording associates the workers in the parable with **Yeshua's** statements in Mattityahu 19:30 and 20:16.

⁹ The workers who came an hour before sunset each received a denarius, ¹⁰ so the workers who came first expected they would get more, but each of them also received just a denarius.

So, the workers who came first expected they would get more. This a reasonable conclusion since those hired at the end of the day received a full day's wage. I know that I would have thought that myself.

¹¹ On receiving their wages, they began grumbling to the farmer, ¹² 'These latecomers have worked only one hour while we have borne the brunt of the day's work in the hot sun, yet you have put them on an equal footing with us!'

Yeshua's audience probably agreed that the owner was unfair: Those who worked more should be paid more.

¹³ But he answered one of them, 'Look, friend, I'm not being unfair with you. Didn't you agree to work today for a denarius? ¹⁴ Now take your pay and go! I choose to give the last worker as much as I'm giving you.

By ignoring when the workers started, the owner demonstrates grace - giving some more than they deserve.

¹⁵ Haven't I the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' ¹⁶ Thus, the last ones will be first and the first last." (see Mattityahu 19:30) ¹

In our next post or two, **Yeshua Returns to Judea to Raise Lazarus.**

¹ Mattityahu 20:1–16.