

# Washington church of Christ

27 Grand Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882

Phone: 201-546-1284

[washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com](http://washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com)

# The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 22

June 23, 2013

## Order of Services

Sunday, June 23, 2013

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Pete Ferencze
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Ralph Ruggiero
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Tom Dolan
Assisting at the Table	Bob Celentano
Scripture Reading	Scott Thomas
Morning Closing Prayer	Lee Redd
Evening Opening Prayer	Bob Wydro
Announcements	Derald Sanchez

## Our Prayer List...

Chrisanne Montgomery ... Doug Focht ... Joan Focht ... Jon Focht ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Donna Banghart ... our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation.

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."*

(1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

## It's Not Fair!

These words are often uttered by children protesting a situation in their lives they deem to be unfavorable towards them. And, in most instances they have reached this conclusion by comparing their situation to one of someone else and determined it to be inferior in some form or fashion.

It could be said that we as adults also, all too often, lament over situations in our lives that we feel are not fair. Many have adopted the world's mantra that *"life itself is not fair"*.

But, what does *fair* mean? In the context that we are using the word, the Encarta Dictionary defines *fair* to mean *"not exhibiting any bias, and therefore reasonable or impartial"*. We see then that by this definition, determining something to be fair, or unfair, requires a comparative analysis to a standard against which bias, impartiality, and "reasonableness" can be judged.

If we are not careful, we will be guilty of judging life's *fairness* by our own subjective standards, rather than recognizing God's sovereign right to determine what is best for man on an individual basis.

In Mathew 20:1-16, Jesus spoke a parable that is often called *The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard*.

The context of this parable as an elucidation of Jesus' immediately preceding statement:

*But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (Matthew 19:30 NKJV)*

The "point" or main lesson of the parable is *"Do not be among the first who become last"*. And, within the parable is revealed a situation to which the theme of this article applies.

In short, Jesus told of a landowner who went to hire laborers for his vineyard. The landowner went out five times from early morning to late afternoon, and each time he hired laborers to work for him.

At the end of the day, as the laborers were being paid, those laborers that were hired in the early morning noticed that the laborers that were hired after them received the same pay ... even those who were hired in the late afternoon.

*But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'* (Matthew 20:10-12 NKJV)

I can easily read into their words their feelings of having been treated unfairly ... to which the landowner responds:

*But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."* (Matthew 20:13-16 NKJV)

Within the landowner's response are two points from which we might better understand how to cope with our feelings of life's situations.

He first stated:

*But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' (Matthew 20:13 NKJV)*

This first group of laborers had agreed with the landowner on the amount of pay they would receive (Matthew 20:2). The point to note here is that is that a conversation apparently takes place between the landowner and these prospective laborers. Whether or not there was any haggling the parable does not state. It is entirely possible that when the owner proposed “a denarius a day” the unemployed men immediately consented, realizing that this was the standard daily wage for both soldier and laborer.

Of course, there may have been some arguing about terms, but we don't know this from the scriptures. One point, however, is clear ... these men who consent to go into the vineyard and to do the work that is required of them are definitely working for wages, not also for the joy of working at such a good place for such a noble owner and for such a worthy purpose. The one thing mentioned with reference to these laborers is that the landowner came to an agreement with them. (Matthew 20:2).

We don't read in the scriptures where the other groups of laborers ever engaged in negotiations on how much they would be paid. We only read that they responded to the landowner's plea of “*You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.*” (Matthew 20:4, 7). They trusted the landowner to pay them whatever he deemed appropriate.

While this may not be a good position for us to take today in the physical world of business, when dealing with God, and all things spiritual we need to avoid falling prey to the *work for wages* spirit. We remember the Rich Young Ruler who came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to have eternal life (Matthew 19:16-22). Jesus quoted commandments of the law, to which the young man replied that he had kept them from his youth. Jesus then instructed him to sell all that he had, give the proceeds to the poor, and come follow Him.

One might think that by instructing the young man to do this, Jesus was further endorsing a *work for wages* spirit, when in reality Jesus in His answer was telling the young man to trust completely in Him!

The young man may have already trusted Jesus, but without *complete* confidence in, and self-surrender to, the One who was issuing the order, the rich young ruler could not be expected to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor.

The landowner's next statement:

*Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?' (Matthew 20:15 NKJV)*

This first group of laborers had failed to acknowledge the right of the landowner to do with what was his as he saw fit. He did not answer to them. If we are not careful, we at times might fail to recognize God's sovereignty, his right to distribute favors as he pleases.

*The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. (Psalms 24:1-2 KJV)*

Those following the Lord according to His Word will at times undergo hardships, even to the point of sufferings.

It is dangerous for us to compare how God deals with us, to how we perceive Him to treat others. We should rather strive to have the mindset of the Apostle Peter when he said:

*Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:19 KJV)*

And, the conviction of the Apostle Peter as he proclaims to the young man Timothy:

*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12 KJV)*

If we adopt the mentality of men, and assess our situations in this life by worldly standards, life may not seem fair ... but if we as children of God, recognize that we are loved and kept by the Creator and Sustainer of all life, and that this earthly life itself is a temporary situation, then while we are here we can truly internalize and make application of David's words when he wrote:

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalms 23:1-6 KJV)*

## EVENTS AND NOTES

WE WILL NOT HAVE THE THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK IN FAVOR OF THE EVENING LADIES BIBLE CLASS

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ THE NEXT LADIES BIBLE CLASS IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 27TH.
- ▲ OUR NEXT PRAYER GATHERING IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 29TH. PETE AND SHARON FERENCZE WILL HOST THIS GATHERING.
- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS/SPIRITUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, JULY 7<sup>TH</sup>, STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ THE NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON LUNCH GATHERING AT MEADOW BREEZE PARK WILL BE ON JULY 14<sup>TH</sup>.
- ▲ THE NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30TH – JULY 5TH.
- ▲ THE WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ▲ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.