

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Matthew 20: 1-16

1. And Jesus saith unto them, I have for thee another parable. And the disciples did sigh with great noise but gathered near and made as if to listen attentively. And He saith, For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder. And Thomas did ask, Hath he paid his mortgage off or doth he rent? And Jesus answered, He hath paid it off through hard work and careful savings, and no squandering on dissolute living. Understood? Right. Now listen. This man went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, which conveniently was within walking distance.
2. And when the disciples did hear that the man did own a vineyard they did concentrate the more hoping for some tips about buying a good vintage for investment. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and, raising His eyes unto heaven in a Johannine way, He continued, This man had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.
3. And James and John did mutter that a penny a day was below the minimum wage even by Roman standards and did agree that they would not work for that. But Thaddeus said that he would. And Jesus said, And the man went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace partaking of coffee and a pastry,
4. And said unto them; Right, you lot! Drink up thy beverages and finish thy breakfasts for I wish ye also to go into the vineyard - yes, that one over there -and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way, wiping the crumbs from their mouths. And some did belch. But not all.
5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, but not the seventh for that was teatime, and did likewise, for there were many men standing about doing little, though some were sitting at ease. And there were some hands on hips. (Let the reader understand.)
6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, What a shower! Why stand ye here all the day idle eating diverse confections and drinking beverages? Eh?
7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us and it is a nice day and we are enjoying the sunshine and playing boules. He saith unto them, Put down your balls and go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. And they did so, leaving their balls in the dust.
8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard, who had confusingly been promoted from a simple householder who had paid off his mortgage, saith unto his steward, The day that God gavest is ended and the darkness falls at His behest. To Him our morning hymns ascended and praise shall sanctify our rest. Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And he did so, humming a tune as he went. And the lord shouted after him, Stop that!
9. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. And they went and spent it on ale and roast meats, for a penny went a long way in those days, and there was even change for the donkey ride home.
10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.
11. And when they had received it, they looked at the coin and murmured against the goodman of the house, possibly a lord,
12. Saying, Whoa! You cannot be serious, dude! [1] These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. We ought to have a union to negotiate on our behalf for this is an injustice., and say, All out, brothers!
13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? And the man did grudgingly agree that this was the case.
14. And the owner, an householder with lordly title, of the vineyard said, Then take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? And he added, Is thine eye evil, because I am good? though they did not readily understand the didactic motif about eyes which had been in the previous chapter of this narrative. So they plucked not. And those that had went back to their balls; and those that had not did not.
16. And withdrawing into his house where supper was waiting for him he said, So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen: and a little of what you fancy does thee good. Right. Tuck in. Me first!

Notes:

[1] Here the Aramaic is uncertain.