

## HOW HERODIAS GETS A-HEAD

As the old saying goes, "The nut never falls far from the tree." *Like father, like son.*

The Herod in chapter 14 is as wicked and vile as his father... the jealous Herod, who murdered the kids of Bethlehem shortly after the birth of Jesus.

When *Herod the Great* died his kingdom was split among his 3 sons... All 3 sons remained puppets of Rome, but they carved up the land into regions. A son named *Herod Antipas* ruled the regions of Perea (*southeast of the Jordan River where John baptized*), and Galilee (*which became Jesus' home base*).

This put Herod Antipas on a collision course with both Jesus and John.

The family life of Herod Antipas looked like an episode of a TV soap opera...

On a trip to Rome he fell in love with his brother's wife, Herodias. The two were married. But when the pastor asked, "If anyone objects to this union let him speak now or forever hold his peace?" John the Baptist boldly confronted the king's sin. He called it what it was - adultery, divorce, incest... and angered the newlyweds.

Herod wanted to kill John, but didn't for fear

of the multitudes. They considered John a prophet from God. As it turns out, his wife was not as politically sensitive.

At Herod's birthday party, Herodias gave her husband a special present. She had her daughter dance. Understand, this was not a square dance, or a fox trot - this was a lewd, seductive dance - a strip tease. It seems the girl and her mom wanted to get ahead in life... *John's head, that is.*

When the dance was done, Herod vowed to give her whatever she wanted - Mark adds the qualifier, "up to half of my kingdom".

If Herod had valued John more than half his kingdom he could've saved him. Evidently, the idea never crossed his mind. Herod ordered his execution, and John's head was delivered on a platter.

It's poetic justice that in 39 AD, the Romans accused Mr. and Mrs. Herod of espionage. They stripped them of their wealth and power - and banished them to Spain. In the end, the man who shunned God, lost everything he possessed.

### Devotion Box - Loaves For Them, Lessons For Us

The crowds that flocked to Jesus created a problem. He had retreated to an off-the-beaten-path location. There wasn't a McDonalds or Waffle House for miles. The disciples want to send the people away, but not Jesus! He tells them to give the crowd something to eat. When they check the brown bags all they can come up with is 5 loaves and 2 fish. It's not much... but verse 18 is the key...

Jesus says, "Bring them here to Me." Bring your meager portion to Jesus - the little you are, or the little you've got - and He'll work a miracle of multiplication.

Verse 19 tells us the 4 things Jesus did with the bread and fish... "He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes." Jesus *took it, blessed it, broke it, and gave it* - and this is His plan for us.

He takes us out of the world and makes us His own.

He blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

He wants to give us as a witness to this world...

But we're not digestible until we're broken. He has to break us of pride and self-sufficiency - teach us how much we need Him, and how to rely on His Spirit.

Guys, it doesn't matter *how little you are, or the little you've got* - if you give your *all* to Jesus, there's no limit to what he can do! Jesus alters the molecular structure of the fish and chips, and with less than a lunch box full, He feeds 5000 people. Verse 21 tells us that's just the men - add women and kids, and it could've been 20,000 mouths. Notice too, the 12 baskets of leftovers - one for each disciple.

### Devotion Box - Not Can He... But Will He...

Matthew 15:29 tells us Jesus skirted the Sea of Galilee. He went eastward into the area known as the Decapolis, or "*Ten Cities*" - this, too, was a Gentile region... and Jesus proved He heals even Gentiles.

Of course, during the 3 days Jesus worked miracles, the people got hungry... You'd think the disciples would've learned. They'd just seen Jesus feed 5000 men with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Now there's just 4000 and a whopping 7 loaves... Yet they still come to Jesus wondering how they're going to feed the crowd...

In fairness to the disciples, I don't think they doubted *if Jesus could do it*, as much as *would He do it*. They're in Gentile territory. Would He do for the Gentiles what He had done for the Jews? The answer was yes... But this is often the test of our faith. We believe He can, but do we believe He will?

## SUPERNATURAL SURFING

In Matthew 14:23 the disciples get in trouble *because* they obey Jesus. They sail into a storm. Guys, rather than shelter us, sometimes obedience puts us in a storm.

The word “*nave*” is an Old English word for the sanctuary of a church. It’s Latin for “*ship*”. For centuries the church was symbolized by this ship in the midst of the storm. Obedience to Jesus runs contrary to the currents and trends of this world.

Two things happen suddenly in this story. There’s a sudden storm, and a supernatural surprise. The disciples think they’re fighting this storm alone. They assume Jesus is *nowhere* to be found... when suddenly He’s *now-here*.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> watch, or around 3:00 AM, Jesus appears walking on the water. When the disciples see Jesus they freak. They think He’s a ghost, but in verse 27 Jesus speaks to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” *He calms the storm in the hearts of the disciples, before He calms the storm on the sea.*

In verse 28, Peter decides to do some supernatural surfing - and He’s staying above water until, “he saw that the wind was boisterous, (and) he was afraid; and beginning to sink...” He did fine as long as his focus was on Jesus, but when he got his eyes off the Savior and on the storm, he began to sink like a brick.

Guys, *focus determines flotation*. If you want to overcome life’s difficulties, keep your eyes on Jesus. Get your eyes on your circumstances and you too, will sink.

Often Peter takes a black eye for this episode, but I admire him. He’s the only disciple who got out of the boat. You can’t walk on water if you stay in the boat!

When Peter sinks, He does know what to do. He cries to Jesus, and the Lord rescues him. *I’d rather surf, then sink - than play it safe, and never leave the boat.*

Remember the same Lord who *allows the storm* - in the end, *stills the storm*. In verse 33, the disciples speak to Jesus, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

## JESUS AND JEWISH TRADITION

The rabbis believed that with the Law, God gave Moses further instructions he didn’t write down, but passed on orally. These oral traditions weren’t written down until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, in a book called the *Mishnah*. Some rabbis considered these traditions as important as the Law itself.

Of particular importance, were the traditions concerning external washing. The rabbis taught that a demon could come at night, and sit on a man’s hand. If he didn’t wash them by breakfast, the demon could enter him via his food.

Jesus knew this was superstition, and ignored the Jewish traditions. Jesus understood that many of the traditions were just loopholes around the Law. He brings up the example of an offering dedicated to the temple.

The Law said honor your parents - but if your parents had a financial need, and you didn’t want to help them, Jewish tradition had a means to launder the money. Dedicate it to the temple, and you could place it out of your parent’s reach. In 15:6, Jesus exposes the scam, “Thus you

have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.” Their tradition was a way around the Law.

Matthew 15:9 accuses the Jews of “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Never place tradition over truth. Some traditions are passed off as biblical that are nothing more than human conjecture. And just because a tradition might be helpful today, doesn’t mean it’ll serve the same purpose tomorrow. Be flexible.

One commentator calls verse 11, “the most revolutionary passage in the New Testament.” Dietary laws, as well as outward washings, played a huge role in Judaism.

Jesus again attacks Jewish tradition in verse 11, “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” The purity God desires doesn’t originate on the plate, or on the hands, but in the heart.

## DRAWING OUT FAITH

Jesus had the uncanny ability to spy out faith - to recognize it in people. When He spotted it, He proceeded to draw it out. This is what He does in 15:21-28.

While in Phoenicia, a Gentile woman with a demon-possessed child seeks Jesus’ help. Jesus’ reaction to the woman is found in verse 23, “He answered her not a word.”

Next He seems to discourage her; He says His primary mission is to Israel.

When she appeals to Jesus again, “Lord, help me!”, He compares the Gentiles to a puppy sitting under the table - and the Jews to the kids eating a meal. No one would deliberately take food from the children and give it to the dogs...

Jesus was first silent. Now He’s playing coy, and hard to get. It’s His way of testing her determination.

Jesus is drawing out her faith. Remember that the next time Jesus is silent to your cries, or plays hard to get. He’s growing your faith.

She says in verse 27, “True, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” She believes that even though the Jews are God’s chosen people, there’s still food at His table for Gentiles. Aren’t we glad! In verse 28 Jesus reveals His true feelings, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”

## THE TURNING POINT

Political campaigns have them, so do wars, stock car races, business careers, romances, even baseball and football games. They're called "turning points".

A presidential hopeful makes a slip of the tongue... or a skillful driver goes into a turn and slips under the leader... or a young salesman lands a giant account...at the time you didn't realize it, but years later you look back on that moment and see that's where the momentum shifted, the focus changed - it was the turning point.

Chapters 16-17 are the turning point in the ministry of Jesus. There were 2 semesters in Jesus' Instruction to His disciples. The first semester could be entitled, "My Identity" - the second semester, "My Destiny". Through chapter 15 the point of Jesus' miracles and teaching is to spotlight *who He is - the Christ*. From chapter 17 until the end of His ministry the emphasis is on *where He's going - the cross*. Chapters 16-17 mark the turning point!

The turning point occurs by a brook on the southern slopes of Mount Hermon - 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. In verse 13 Jesus ask His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And there were all kinds of opinion. Some said John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or a special prophet from God.

But in verse 14 Jesus asks the million dollar question, "Who do you say that I am?" This is the crucial question for us... what do you believe about Jesus?

Matilda Crabtree was 14 years old when she died. Before her death, she and her dad loved to play practical jokes, and often scared each other. One night she told her parents she'd gone to a friend's house - instead she stayed home and hid in her parent's closet. In the middle of the night she started making spooky noises. When her dad opened the door, Matilda shouted, "Boo!" The frightened father shot his daughter with a .357. The little girl's final words were, "I love you, daddy."

Cases of mistaken identity can be deadly... And here's another example: if you don't rightly identify Jesus, it can cost you dearly - you can die for all eternity.

Peter steps up to answers Jesus' question, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew, "Messiah". Jesus says, "A+, Peter" - God in heaven revealed to you that truth.

Then Jesus adds, verse 18, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." In the original Greek the words "Peter" and "rock" are the same root words, but in different genders. "Peter" is "*petros*" - the masculine - it means "*a pebble*". The word "rock" is "*petra*" - the feminine - a cliff, or a mountain face.

Jesus reaches into the brook and pulls out a pebble, "Simon, from now on you'll be called Peter, a little pebble." In contrast, the Christ of whom you've just spoken is a huge mountain - and on your statement of faith I will build My Church!

Here's the turning point... *Who is Jesus?* He's the Messiah, but *where is He going?* He tells them in verse 21, "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." The disciples know Jesus is the *Christ*, now they learn He's headed to the *cross*. Perhaps this was the harder lesson to learn.

Peter had trouble digesting it. Verse 22 tells us Peter rebuked Jesus, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" Jesus replied, "Get behind Me, Satan!" It's odd, one moment Peter receives a revelation from God. The next moment, he's Satan's pawn.

Jesus is headed for the cross... and He says in verse 24, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Hear what Jesus is saying to His disciples! *You wanted to follow Me when you knew Who I was, but what about now - once you know where I'm going?*

What about you? Will you lay aside your selfish ambitions? Deny yourself? Lose your life for Jesus' sake? Are you willing to follow Jesus to the cross?

## A FIRST SEMESTER FIELD TRIP

In chapter 17, Jesus, Peter, James, and John climb the 9000' high slopes of Mount Hermon, but in a sense, they hike all the way to heaven. The mountain beheld a miracle... Jesus was transfigured. His face beamed. His clothes became as white as light. Moses and Elijah - representing the Law and Prophets - stood by His side. God spoke, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him."

The Greek word translated "transfigured" is the word from which we get our word "*metamorphosis*" or "*to change from the inside out*". For a moment, His humanity was peeled back and Jesus could be seen in His heavenly glory.

This was the climax to the first semester of Jesus ministry. Jesus teaches them *who He is*, then takes His prize pupils on a field trip to see it for themselves.

Peter though, wants to stay on the mountain. It's fun to

bask in God's glory. He says in verse 4, *let's pitch tents*. But that's not the point. The glory will come, but the cross comes first. The Jews killed John - Jesus will suffer too. God lets them see Jesus *transfigured*, so they won't lose heart when they see Him *disfigured*.

When they descend from Mount Hermon, the disciples are reminded why God gives us mountaintop experiences. They prepare us for the battle below... Immediately, they're confronted by a boy possessed by a demon.

Jesus rebukes the demon and delivers the boy. When the disciples wonder why they were powerless over the demon, Jesus tells them the problem is two-fold - *faithlessness and prayerlessness*... An athlete adds muscle through exercise and diet. The disciples need to work out their faith, and add fasting and prayer to their diet.

# Bible Scan - Matthew 14-20

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - October 7, 2001 - Ladies Retreat, October 19-20, "It's A Jungle Out There: Choosing The Better Part" - Hallelujah Fest, "One Nation Under God", October 31 (candy needed) - Next Bible Scan - October 21, 2001 - Matthew 21-25

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." - Matthew 16:24

Bible Scan  
Memory Verse

## THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18 communicates three truths about the church...

First, *Jesus bought the Church*. He calls it "My church".

Second, *Jesus builds the Church*. "I will build My church." Jesus never asks us to *build* the church, just *be* the church. *If we be, He will build*.

Third, *Jesus does battle through the Church*. "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Gates are defensive, thus the church is on the attack.

## TAX TIME

It was the fall of the year, and the temple tax was paid in the spring. The temple tax agents track Jesus down, and point out His payment is six months past due.

First, Jesus doesn't really owe tax. Does a son pay rent to his father? No, so why would God's Son pay His Father tax to stay in His own house?

Jesus didn't owe the tax, but apparently, this was not an issue worth fighting over - so He pays up. It's said, "A bulldog can whip a skunk, but is it really worth the effort?" Some victories aren't really worth the effort spent to win them.

What's fascinating though about the story is how Jesus raises funds.

Jesus sends Peter to the lake with a rod and reel to catch a fish. Peter is told to look in it's mouth, and find the exact coin needed

to pay the taxes. It's a miracle!

Ask the odds-makers the probability of a single fish out of millions of fish having a coin in it's mouth - swimming in a lake 14 miles long by 8 miles wide - striking a specific, baited hook - just as Peter drops his worm into the water - then yielding exact change?

One year I owed \$1500 (I didn't have) on my income tax. I was on my way to a funeral when I was hit by a tractor-trailer. Miraculously, I walked away without a scratch - and other than a few dents, my car still operated. Take a wild guess on how much money the insurance paid on the damages? Yep, \$1500. I kept driving, and used the \$1500 to pay my taxes.

Jesus loves us so much He'll even help us pay back taxes.

## BINDING AND LOOSING

In Matthew 18:18-19 Jesus gave the 12 apostles authority to bind and loose. *Binding and loosing*, are rabbinical terms that mean *to prohibit* or *to approve*.

The apostles used this authority to establish the faith and practice of the early church. Acts 15 is a great example of binding and loosing in action. This is what gave the 12 apostles the authority to oversee the writing of the New Testament.

## Devotion Box - The Kingdom's MVP

College football has it's *Heisman Trophy*. Pro football, the *Jim Thorpe Trophy*. NHL hockey, the *Hart Memorial Trophy*. College basketball, the *Wooten Award*. Football, hockey, basketball are team sports - the focus is on the success of the team - but there's still a desire to pick out the best, individual player. That's why there's *employee of the month*. Even churches have *deacon of the week*. Why, a kid can't play Little League without parents wanting to select All Stars.

In fact, Jesus' own disciples asked Him to name an MVP. Matthew 18:1, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

It must've blew them away, when Jesus picks up a little child from the crowd - holds him up for everyone to see - then answers in verse 4, "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little

child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Once an elderly gentleman walked into a toy store, and stood gazing at the electric trains. With a gleam in his eye he told the clerk, "I'll take one." The clerk said, "I'll bet your grandson will really enjoy a train set." The man thought for a moment and responded, "You know you're right. You'd better get him one too."

In certain ways, Jesus wants us to be like little children.

A little child is *sincere, sensitive, simple, and submissive*. An adult is *two-faced, too-calloused, too-complicated, and too-conceited*. Hey, when it comes to faith we need to turn back the clock, and return to a child-like faith. A child is Jesus' MVP.

# Bible Scan - Matthew 14-20 - Bonus Page 1

## THE LOVE OF GOD

In Matthew 18:10-14, Jesus tells the story of the lost sheep. The shepherd leaves the 99 to seek out the one. This is the attitude God has toward you and me.

This story teaches 3 truths about the love of God...

First, it's *unconditional!* God never sees a lost sheep and says, "Hey, this is the third time this month he's been lost. Forget it this time." No! His love has no limits.

Second, God's love is *individual!* He loves the single sheep, not just the 99. It's been said, "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love."

Third, His love is *emotional!* When God finds us, it causes Him to rejoice!

### Devotion Box - Praying As A Team

In Matthew 18:19 Jesus encourages His followers to pray as a team. "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

I have 4 kids, and seldom do they all agree on anything. At times I'll give them what they want, if they'll just show a little unity.

I believe this is Jesus' point. Agree together, find some common ground, unite in prayer, and your prayer will carry a little extra punch. God will answer... Hey, when just 2 or 3 gather together in Jesus' name, He promises to be there too.

## RESTORING A BROTHER

How do you restore a brother who has sinned against you. Reconciliation is a three-fold process...

First, if a brother or sister sins against you, go to that person and work it out.

Second, if they won't listen - then go back with 1 or 2 more witnesses.

Third, if still unrepentant, in an appropriate manner, bring them before the church.

And, if all else fails, remove them from membership, and consider them an unbeliever. We've had to do this on several occasions, and it's always hard. But more times than not, the person we excommunicated has repented and returned.

### Devotion Box - How Much Is Enough?

In Matthew 18:21 Peter asks if it's enough to forgive your brother 7 times? The Jewish rabbis taught if you forgave a person 2 or 3 times, it was enough. Peter thinks "7 times" is being extremely generous...

But in verse 22, Jesus tells him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

That doesn't mean you count 490, then punch the guy out. *If you're keeping count you're missing the point.* Put no limitations on your willingness to forgive.

Jesus uses a parable to illustrate the lesson.

A king forgives a man \$10 million. But the forgiven man doesn't forgive. He finds a guy who owes him 20 bucks, and has him arrested. When it comes back to the king, he arrests the man, and instructs the torturers to teach him a lesson. The moral of the story... forgive others to the degree God has forgiven you.

## JESUS ON DIVORCE

In 19:3 the Pharisees test Jesus with a question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" This was the day's hot theological topic.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 stipulated that when a man divorced his wife for "some uncleanness" it was his duty to write a certificate of divorce, and send her away.

The rabbis debated what constituted "uncleanness". Rabbi Hillel said it was anything - even a burnt dinner. Rabbi Shammai limited it to sexual promiscuity.

But both schools were in error because they assumed Moses' intent was to condone divorce. It wasn't. Moses was trying to discourage what already existed by regulating the practice. The law wasn't a *commandment*, but a *concession*.

Jesus straightens it out by going back to the very first marriage. At creation you see what God intended. One man, one woman in a lifelong, loving commitment.

Deuteronomy 24 was a concession to hard hearts. Old Testament saints had yet to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. If the choice was between two people killing each

other or getting a divorce, then Moses permitted the divorce. But as Christians we have no excuse for a hard heart. The Spirit lives within us.

That's why Jesus says in verse 9 the only biblical justification for divorce and remarriage is "sexual immorality". 1 Corinthians 7 adds another - *abandonment*. But other than those two... *husband and wife, soften your heart and work it out!*

Note the context of this passage - it's after Jesus' teaching on forgiveness in chapter 18.

Forgive as God has forgiven you... *and start with your spouse.* And if it's too late - if the divorce is final - ask God to forgive you. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. God forgives if we determine not to repeat our mistakes.

Forgive as God has forgiven you...  
*and start with your spouse.*

# Bible Scan - Matthew 14-20 - Bonus Page 2

## THE RICH YOUNG RULER

### WHEN HE COMES...

In Matthew 19:16 Jesus is confronted with a rich, young ruler. He's got money and power. He's young and energetic. He's moral. He's kept all the commandments. This guy would be an asset to any Christian ministry. Most pastors would make him an elder - but Jesus knew there was one thing he lacked.

In verse 21, Jesus strikes at the heart of his problem, "Go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

He had yet to yield his life to God. Money was his idol. Here's the lesson for us - before we can follow Jesus we first have to get rid of other gods. Dump the idols.

For this man it was money, but what's your idol? Sports? Cars? Job? Sex? The rich ruler went away sorrowful, because he loved his money more than Jesus.

### GREATNESS IN GOD'S KINGDOM

In 20:17-19, Jesus begins His final trip to Jerusalem. And He wants His disciples to be prepared for the difficult road that lays before them. Betrayal, arrest, mockery, scourging, and crucifixion are a few weeks away. But the disciples are oblivious.

The next exchange proves how dense they were - their eyes were on their own exaltation and glory. Salome, the mother of James and John, asks Jesus if her two sons may occupy the most prominent posts when He establishes His kingdom.

In essence, Jesus says, "*Your thinking is so far off - a cup of suffering awaits us - a baptism of death - not glory and greatness. A cross is ahead, not a crown!*"

Verse 24 tell us, when the other 10 disciples heard of the power play James and John had tried to pull, they were upset. They also wanted to be greatest. But in verses 24-28 Jesus defines true greatness...

The world measures greatness by the number of people under you. It's just the opposite in God's kingdom. The greatest in the kingdom is the servant of all. Leaders among the Gentiles gain power, and manipulate other people. Leaders in God's kingdom give power away, and serve other people.

Verse 28 holds Jesus up as the ultimate example, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." If Jesus Himself came to earth to serve, who are we not to do likewise?

### WHEN HE LEAVES...

Apparently, this exchange shook up the disciples. This man looked like an ideal disciple. They didn't understand the issues. Unlike Jesus, they didn't see his heart. In the next few verses Jesus addresses their doubts and confusion...

First, it is tough for a rich man to enter heaven. It's like getting a camel through a needle. Wealth tends to strangle faith, yet with God all things are possible.

Second, if the man had given away his wealth it wouldn't have been for long. In the kingdom, anyone who sacrifices for Jesus' sake, will be more than repaid. In 19:29, "they shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit everlasting life."

Third, verse 30, "many who are first will be last, and the last first." Heaven will hold lots of surprises. Some of earth's rich, young rulers won't be ruling in heaven. The highest posts in heaven will be occupied by folks you never heard of on earth.

### COMPENSATION IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Heavenly rewards are doled out differently than earthly riches. In the kingdom of God the rules change. In chapter 20, Jesus illustrates this with a parable...

On earth, a man's *compensation* is determined by his *contribution*. The guys who sweat and slave in the vineyard from sun-up to sundown, 6 AM to 6 PM, expect greater pay than the guys who work a single hour. And when the boss pays the 5 PM guys the wage they're expecting, they get excited. Surely, they'll get a bonus. When it doesn't happen they hit the roof. They want to file a grievance.

But here's Jesus' point. The rule in His kingdom is *grace, not fairness*. It's not that Jesus is ever unfair, *but His fairness to one doesn't prevent grace to another*.

If the boss feels generous, why can't he show it however he chooses? God bestows rewards based on His grace and sovereignty! The key to contentment is to focus on *what God chooses to give*, rather than *what He chooses not to give*.

### Devotion Box - Don't Let'em Shut You Up

As Jesus leaves Jericho for the climb to Jerusalem, He's met by two blind men. They're calling for Jesus - screaming loudly... the crowd is telling them to shut up.

But they won't be deterred. They won't be discouraged from seeking Jesus.

I hope you have the same attitude. Don't let anyone *scare you off* or *shut you up*. The blind men kept calling, until Jesus called back, and opened their eyes.