



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA

By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
Matthew 19:23–20:16
Version

March 23, 2014
English Standard

“The Vineyard of the King”

The 67th Sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew entitled
“The King and His Kingdom!”

Matthew 19:23-20:16

“And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.”²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed You. What then will we have?”²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Matthew 20:1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace,⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same.⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to

them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.'⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.'⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius.¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house,¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?'¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?'¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last."

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning that we would not only hear and understand its explanation, but that by the power and grace of the Spirit, our hearts might be transformed so as not only to apprehend its truth, but be changed to the character of Your Son. We ask, O Lord, that You would make us willing disciples and hopeful disciples because of the truth of this word. So by Your Spirit open this Gospel to us and help us to see Jesus, and, as always, for this we need Your grace. Give us the desire to learn from You this morning, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: "Dys-Grace-Ful People"¹

You know, sometimes the most experienced Christians, the ones who know the most about the Bible, and who are more versed in the truths of Christianity, can sometimes be the ones who know the least about **real simple grace**. Somehow ... some Christians who have been hanging around the church a long time, just don't grasp grace ... they don't understand it ... they don't get it. And that's dys-grace.

And then grace becomes ... **dysfunctional**. The prefix **dys-** goes back to Middle English, back to Latin, back to Greek and it **negates** something. So that **dis**-ease means sickness, and **dis**-pepsia means indigestion, and **dys**-functional means it doesn't work right. That's how we use words with **dys-** at the beginning.

And so **dys-grace** becomes something that depends on **works**, not grace.

And that's what's going on in this story that Jesus told in Matthew 20.

Now before we get to **Matthew 20** and the famous parable of "**The Laborers in the Vineyard**," we have to realize that this parable is actually an extended illustration of what Jesus has just taught them in **Matthew 19**. And, of course, He teaching came about because the incident with the Rich Young Ruler. If you remember from last week, and if you weren't here you can listen to it or read it online at our website, but essentially, Jesus uses this incident to teach the disciples important spiritual lessons. These men were going to be shepherds of souls, and He wanted them to learn some important things from this tragic exchange which He's just had with the Rich Young Ruler. He wants them to learn that the love of this world blinds us

¹ The Introduction is adapted from a sermon I heard from Rev. Frank Boswell at a Presbytery meeting about 15 years ago. Frank is the pastor of Hunt Valley Church (PCA) in Hunt Valley, MD and was very helpful advising Potomac Hills in our early days.

to spiritual wealth, but that **God's grace** is sovereign. Furthermore, He was answering Peter's questions that resulted from this incident and His teaching. And in so doing, He wants them to understand that their priorities ... are not necessarily ...

19:23–30: KINGDOM PRIORITIES²

“And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.”²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed You. What then will we have?”²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

In this passage, when Jesus says **“Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven,”** He is making it clear to His disciples that the love of the world and the love of money make us **complacent** towards heavenly riches ... and even experiencing material prosperity ... can make us **complacent** towards the Lord.

This would have been a jolt to Jesus' contemporaries and maybe even to the disciples. In their day they thought of **wealth** as a sign of God's divine blessing upon a man. And here was a man who was outwardly moral. He was respected. He was wealthy. He showed every sign of being God's child, and yet he goes away grieving, and we read, verse 25, *When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”*

And Jesus says, and I'm paraphrasing, “I'm glad you asked. Let Me tell you. It's impossible with men. **You can't earn** your salvation by the keeping of the commandments. **You can't be** good enough to be acceptable to God. You've got to throw yourself on the **mercy** of God and find the richness of His **grace AS THE SOLE GROUND** for your acceptance with God Almighty.”

Salvation is humanly impossible for **all men**, whether we're poor or rich, no matter how moral or how favored we may be. No matter how much money we have, no man can **earn** the favor of God. That is **only** received by God's grace.

But you need to understand that **the one thing** that can block you from reaching out for the grace of God ... is fooling yourself into thinking that **you're already rich**. You see why Jesus speaks so frankly here, why He's so brutally honest? This man has been lulled to sleep thinking that he has it all. **And he has NOTHING** ... because he doesn't have God.

This is so applicable to us today, in a day and time where sociologists talk about us suffering from **affluenza**. Our very **comfort** has made it comfortable to live apart from God. The Lord's Supper tells us that our worldly comfort means nothing. And that our own worthiness is not the main thing anyway. **His worthiness**, the worthiness of the Lord Jesus

2 The Exposition of the text is largely adapted from my sermon, “Is This Worth It?” preached here on 11/15/98; **Other sermons used were:** “The Impossibility of Salvation” 1/10/99 and “Kingdom Rewards for Faithful Disciples” 1/17/99, both by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, www.fpcjackson.org; and “Barriers to the Kingdom” by Dr. Phil Newton, South Woods Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, 7/25/04, www.southwoodsbc.org.

Christ, is the only way into fellowship with God. And Jesus wants the disciples to understand that.

And so, Peter and the disciples want to ask a question – Are there kingdom rewards for faithful disciples? You see, Peter’s question in verse 27, “*Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed You. What then will we have?”*” When You call us to leave everything and follow You, can we expect to be rewarded for that? Is there some sort of compensation when you call us to that type of commitment? Lord, are there kingdom rewards for faithful disciples?

Peter, in light of what Jesus had just pronounced about the Rich Young Ruler, is asking about the status of the disciples. Notice he uses we and us. He doesn’t say, ‘Lord, what about me?’ He says, ‘What about us, Lord? We left everything and followed **You**. What about us? What is our status in **Your kingdom?**’ In other words, he’s saying, ‘Lord, if we’ve lost the world **for Your sake**, I mean, if we have risked being kicked out of synagogues, if we have risked losing our family connections, if we have risked our trade, our vocation, our material ability to provide for our families **for Your sake**, can we expect there to be some sort of reward? Have we done this in vain?’ Friends, this is a key question, because the Lord doesn’t just call His apostles, but all those who profess faith in Him, all those who are His disciples, to leave everything **and follow Him**. And that means, at the very least, that there can be **nothing** in this life that has priority over Him. That’s the nature of the call to discipleship.

And apparently the Apostle Peter learned that lesson well. Because later on in his life, the roles were reversed. He was the teacher now. And the people’s he’s teaching are asking him the hard questions. Let’s jump over to **1 Peter 3** and look at what Peter is teaching here. Peter is preaching to people for whom the Kingdom of God is not working out the way they planned. They thought life would be **grand** ... yet they were suffering. They thought they’d be **well liked** ... and yet they were hated and persecuted. They thought people would **accept them** ... and yet they were rejected. And they had to be wondering, “Is Jesus really worth it?”

So Peter is letting them know that “Yes, things are working out differently than you expected. But in God’s Kingdom ... that’s okay. God knows what He’s doing. And **this time** that looks and feels **real bad** ... is being used by God to accomplish His purposes and bring about the spread of the Gospel of God’s Grace and the Extension of the Kingdom of God ... and that’s **real good**.” And I can see them agreeing with Peter, but coming back with something like, “You know, Peter, we hear what you’re saying, but ... we’re just not getting the ‘**real good**’ part.”

These people Peter was writing to were going through **rough days**. They were doing the **right things**. They were believing the **right stuff**. They were using all the **right words**. They were good people. And they were suffering for it.

“I mean, come on God, what’s going on here? These persecutions and martyrdom’s ... that’s scary stuff. I’m worried about what’s going to happen to me. I’m worried about what’s going to happen to my family.” And Peter says, “Continue to do what’s right. God knows what’s going on. He’s still in charge. He’s still God. So find your focus ... Worship Christ as Lord of your life.”

So Peter takes this time in **1 Peter 3** to let them know God is using all these hard times, when things aren’t going the way you think they should, to draw people to Himself, to **receive His grace**. People are looking at these suffering Christians in total bewilderment. You are

putting up with so much. Why? What is this **hope** you have that enables you to get through this?

And Peter is letting them know this question is coming. And they're going to have to answer it. They're not in a situation where they can say, "Let me check with the Pastor on that and get back to you." And in his trying to encourage them, he teaches them that not only to maintain their **hope** in Christ in the midst of hard times, but be able to overflow with Christ in telling others about it.

1 Peter 3:13-18, "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the HOPE that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect**, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."

And Peter says that if that's true, then you have **real hope**. Something really worth **hoping** for. Eternal life, everlasting life, life lived in the presence of God. And that life doesn't start when you get to Heaven, that life starts now. So hang in there. Maintain your courage. Things may not turn out the way you expect, but God knows what He's doing and is going to actively work in people's lives because of this difficult situation.

But still sometimes, we think God is unfair. Which means it's time to get back to Matthew. Jesus has taught hard lessons, and then He gives this parable as an extended illustration of what He has taught. The disciples are questioning their own value in the kingdom, they're wondering about what kind of rewards they're going to get for having sacrificed so much to follow Christ. And it seems that they may not fully understand ... **yet**. And so Jesus tells them a ...

20:1-16: KINGDOM PARABLE

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with

what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

You remember that out in the market square there were all these people standing around. They weren't idlers or lazy people ... they were looking for a job. And at particular times of the year, a landowner would come to the local labor exchange to hire people to work in his fields ... to harvest his fields before the crops rotted. So this particular landowner came and he took a bunch of men early in the morning, about 6 o'clock, and then he went back later, then at noon, then again at 3 in the afternoon. Finally he went back at 5:00 p.m. and there was still a bunch of people hanging around and he hired them.

Then, at the end of the day, the people who were **hired last** were **paid first**. They got a day's wage, which is what the people who were hired at 6 in the morning were promised to be paid. So the workers who had been there all day got excited ... "Oh, boy ... if these guys, who only worked one hour, got a whole day's pay, what are we gonna get? Twelve days pay. This is great."

But when they found out they were only getting one day's pay, they got angry and upset. They criticized the people who got hired later, because they didn't have to work in the heat of the day, and they didn't have to work those long, hot hours that those first hires had to work. They thought they were friends with the landowner, but now they were asking themselves, "Is this friendship worth it?"

And when you first hear this odd parable that Jesus told, you tend to side with those guys. Most people on first reading say, "Yeah, what's the deal? What gives?" And as always, Jesus has used a story to tell us that "The Kingdom of God isn't quite what you expect. Prepare to be astonished. Prepare to be thrown upside-down in the Kingdom of God."

These men are suffering with the disease of **dys-grace**, dysfunctional grace.

I mean, if you had gone to any of those men at six in the morning and told them they were hired, they would have been thrilled. Because these men always lived on the edge of survival. If they weren't hired, they would have had to go home to their wives that night and say, "I didn't a job today. I wasn't able to earn anything. There's no money to buy food. We're going to be eating the labels off the soup cans. That's what dinner's gonna be. I'm sorry."

At six in the morning they would have been thrilled to death. They got a job. But suddenly you come to the end of the day, and they're not happy anymore. The joy is gone. Their reason for happiness hasn't changed. They got a job for the wage they agreed to. But now other people are receiving God's grace, and these men don't think those others are as **deserving** as they are. And so they get bent out of shape and the joy is gone.

And Jesus is using this story to communicate a really important message. And that important message is this — things in the Kingdom of God don't always work the way you expect. God does things **differently** than we would. Now we have two pictures of two groups of people. **One group in Matthew** got jobs, got needs met, but were unhappy and grumpy. **Another group in 1st Peter** lost their jobs, lost their way of life, yet were learning from God and trusting Him, holding tight to Him as their **hope** ... even though things didn't look so great at the moment. Do you see a difference between these two groups?

Now let me ask you a hard question.

Which group of people would you most likely fall into?

Would you be in that group of workers who were hired first and were going to be able to take of their family, but were upset and angry because others **less deserving** than them would get

paid the same amount? Or would you be in that group of people who had lost their jobs, lost their homes, weren't able to meet their needs, and yet were **trusting Christ**? I'm afraid that far too many people in the church today would belong in the first group.

I mean, can someone who started with Christ and be alive and full of joy **end up** as a disgruntled, unhappy, grumpy Christian? It sure seems that way. I mean, it appears that **it's possible** to be around spiritual things, **it's possible** to hang around church, **it's possible** to be around God, and have all the **right** answers, obey all the **right** rules, say all the **right** things ... **and not have the real disease**. And instead of grace ... you have **dys-grace**.

The guys who were hired early in the morning would bad-mouth the landowner, and tell others, "His friendship isn't worth it. He doesn't pay his people fairly." They were so negative and pessimistic about what's going on. George Bernard Shaw had it right when he said, "Pessimists. A man who thinks everyone else is as nasty as himself. ... And hates them for it." These first hires were jumping up and down shouting, "Hey, this is **unfair ... unfair ... unfair**."

The guys who were hired at the end of the day knew the score. They knew they didn't **deserve anything**. And they had to know it wasn't fair that they got a full paycheck. I mean, they must have been astonished. They got hired at the end of the day and yet they got a **full paycheck**. If you asked them about the landowner, they would have said, "Can you believe it? I got hired at the end of the day and got **far more** than I deserved ... I got just as much as everyone else. This guy paid me **in full** out of the compassion and kindness of his heart. That's so amazing! I would work for that man again in a heartbeat. He provided for my family when I **didn't earn it** and I **didn't deserve it**. What a great guy!"

CONCLUSION: Peter, Reginald Denny, and Me!

Now do you think the Apostle Peter didn't understand the message there?

He knew that, once upon a time, he was one of those **grumpy first hires**. He was an ungrateful guy always comparing himself to others. And later on, as he sat down to write his epistle to these suffering people, I think He may have remembered a time in his life when he was walking on the beach with Jesus. You can find it at the end of John's Gospel. Jesus had taken Peter back as a disciple and restored him three times, just as Peter had once denied Christ three times. And they're walking on the beach and Jesus gives one of those enigmatic statements that indicates that Peter's going to die an unpleasant death.

These are the great moments in the Bible.

Forget the Red Sea and all that stuff. **This** is the really cool stuff.

Peter says, "Really, well what about John?" Jesus comes to us and gives us His grace, something we don't deserve, and we say, "Really, well what about them?" They're not going to get grace too, are they? That's not fair." And Jesus says to us, as He does to Peter, "**What is that to you? What do you care?** If he stays around till I come back, **You Follow Me!**" That's all Jesus is telling us to do. "Don't get caught up in being all grumpy and put out about My grace because others get it too. **You Follow Me!**"

And Peter is telling these people, and us, "Hey, don't get caught up in all the hard stuff and forget Christ. Follow Him, be grateful for His Grace. In the middle of this hell, Christ is with you, and His grace is still there. ... I know, because once I was ungrateful and doing the comparison thing and was paying more attention to the grace others were getting than to the one **who was giving the grace in the first place**." Don't do that. All this will end. But Christ will never end. His grace will be with you to the end of time. **That's your hope**. And if that's your

hope, you can be thankful no matter what your circumstances. And if that's your **hope**, you have something that can overflow into the lives of others.

Don't be distracted by **dys-grace**. Hang on to the simple grace of God. And He will use it in your life and in the lives of others. You know what grace is like? ... Grace is like we were on death row waiting to be executed ... and the jailer comes in ... and not only unlocks and opens the door, but steps inside and says, "Congratulations, you just won the Nobel Prize." That's how bizarre this Christian Grace thing really is. You are **not only not getting** what you do deserve, you are getting something **you don't deserve!**

Those first hires were ungrateful and disrespectful and critical. They were focusing on outward actions instead of the inside heart attitudes. I mean, they did everything right. They showed up on time, agreed to the day's pay, they worked hard, didn't steal, and everything was fine. But they had the words and not the tune. Down in their hearts, they weren't dancing, they weren't alive, they weren't grateful. They were so upset that things weren't **fair** they lost sight of the grace they'd received. The landowner didn't have to hire them. But he did. **They would eat that night**. But they got so wrapped up in crying '**unfair**' that their grace started to get dysfunctional and became **dys-grace**. Now, it wasn't fair.

Look at the guys who died on the cross next to Jesus. Was that fair? He came to Christ at the very end, and Christ called him to Himself. And we can look at that with a calculating eye and say, "Hey! That's not fair. He didn't serve in the Christian life in the heat of the day like we did. He's getting in at the end of the day. He doesn't deserve it as much as we do. What's the deal, Jesus? Why you letting him in?" **No**, It wasn't fair. **Yes**, we serve a God who's not fair.

If you want **FAIR** ... **you're going to have to go join another religion where you get what you deserve**. Because the God of the Bible ... the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ... the God of Peter, James, and John ... the God who says, "***I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,***" ... **is not fair!** Because He doesn't give you what you deserve. He gives you real life for an eternity ... that there is **no way** you can earn or deserve that. ... And that's grace.

And that's different than what you expect. Things in the Kingdom of God don't always work the way you expect. The Kingdom of God has turned things upside-down and given you grace, not fairness. Thank God

Almost twenty years ago, a man appeared on the Today show. The man's name was Reginald Denny. Now if you remember back then, some twenty years ago, there were bad race riots in Los Angeles, there was an incident where a man, a truck driver, got pulled out of his truck and was being beaten. It was videotaped. And he was **being beaten to death**.

It was Reginald Denny. And he would have died had not someone gone over there, waded into that mob, pulled him out, and saved his life. Reginald Denny is a big, burly, truck driver. And he's on the Today show, and Katie Couric asks him, "Reginald, how do you feel about this man who saved your life?" And you could see the tears well up in his eyes and roll down his face. He got all choked up and emotional. And he strained to get the words out ... "I don't know what to say. I could never do enough for this person for what he has done for me. He didn't have to come and risk his life to save my life. I didn't even know the guy. There was no reason in the world for him to do it. But he just came and he did it. **And I would do anything for him.**"

And when I hear that story, as I did again recently, I have to ask myself, "Why don't I feel that way about Jesus every day of my life?" **Reginald Denny understands grace ... and sometimes I don't.**

As of March 3rd, just a few weeks ago, I've now been a follower of Christ **for 40 years**. But I'm sorry to say that much of that time **I was a first hire**. I was looking for fairness and living in **dys-grace**. I didn't understand grace at all. Other times I was lamenting my situation. Things weren't turning out the way I thought they should, and I questioned God for not meeting my expectations. Often, I failed to trust Christ in the hard times. And because of that I didn't truly worship Christ as Lord of my life. My hope was in what I **deserved**. And I couldn't have explained my hope to another, let alone gently and respectfully, because it certainly wasn't overflowing out of my life. **I was a first hire**.

And somewhere along the line, I encountered God's Grace. And I realized that I really wasn't the first hire I thought I was. In reality, it was the end of the day and I was just getting in. But to my astonishment, I was getting the same thing everybody else was getting. My sins were paid for in full. I didn't **deserve** that. And God's Grace overwhelmed me. The truly radical nature of what God had done on my behalf floored me. And I didn't deserve a lick of it.

And all of a sudden I began to identify with these last hires, and with the prodigal son, and with Peter after a walk on the beach with Jesus. And I read this letter of 1st Peter and him telling these people to focus on Christ in order that they may know Christ, and so they can grow in their relationship with Christ, and so they can overflow with **this hope** that they have in Christ. And I think ... you can't do that apart from God's Grace. It really is all of Grace from beginning to end.

Which group do you belong to? The ungrateful first hires? Or with those people who are so **thankful** they've found grace, they call Jesus a friend forever. Are you standing with those same undeserving people who can say in the words of **2 Timothy 1:8-9**, "*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, **not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.***" That's the simple grace of God. It's what makes living in the vineyard of the King really worth it. It's what makes this friendship with God really worth it.

Thank God that even though it's the end of the day, He's come back for you ... Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have given us a King. In this passage, we see Your Son. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and then see our Savior. Oh Lord, our attitude about You, about Your generosity, changes everything. It helps us to be able to sing things like, "Whatever My God Ordains Is Right." Only a person who loves and serves a generous God can sing a song like that in difficult times. Lord, we can't just generate this attitude on our own. We need the work of the Spirit. So we ask that by the grace of the Spirit you would change us, change our attitude that we would be thankful and content and satisfied, and that daily we would **wonder** at the **generous grace of God** — given to such undeserving people as us. And yet, despite our grumbling, despite our first hire attitude, You come for us at the end of the day ... in order to bring us home. And we know that we can only be there by faith. And so, O Lord, if there is anyone among us this day, who comes here not trusting in Christ, we would ask that by Your Spirit that You would draw that person to Yourself — by grace alone — that they might embrace Christ the King. Help us to know and believe that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Amen.*

This message has been lightly edited and formatted for the web page. No attempt has been made to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template. There may be slight differences with the audio version. Should there be any questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any error to be with the original speaker and should contact him directly. For full copyright, reproduction and permissions information, please visit the PHPC Copyright statement at www.PotomacHills.org.

Titus 3:4-7

*“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy,** by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*