

Matthew 20

ASVh with Comments

Summary. We should keep in mind that the Lord was traveling non-stop, and great crowds followed Him at all times. In Chapter 19, we find the Lord Jesus in the region of Judea beyond Jordan. In Chapter 20, the Lord is traveling back from Judea beyond the Jordan, and then we see that “Jesus is going up to Jerusalem,” and later, it says, “as they went out of Jericho.” This chapter concentrates on the love and mercy of the true master who has the highest authority but chooses to rule His people with love and mercy, which is the Father. Christians must worship the God of Three (the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) in One, but we learn that the Father is first. All humans are born with the knowledge of who the master is, and they must learn who the master is and accept the decisions and authority of the master. In this chapter, the Lord Jesus interacts with His disciples, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, the sons of Zebedee James and John, a crowd of people from Jericho, and two blind men. 1) The Lord Jesus tells the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The parable teaches us that the Lord is fair, and He gives one Bible to the whole world. Our duty is to meditate on the Word. In heaven, there is no disagreement from below to above, and all must accept the authority of the master. We must accept the “denarius” reward without grumbling. 2) The Lord Jesus foretells about His crucifixion to the disciples. He tells them that His own people are the ones who will deliver Him to the outsiders to be crucified, but He will rise again on the third day. Here, we must remember that the Lord Jesus always glorifies the Father, even in His earthly sufferings. 3) The Lord Jesus addresses the request of the mother of the sons of the Zebedee. He says that her request is subject to the highest authority, the Father. However, this does not go against the God of Three; it just shows us that the Father is above all, and He is first in all things. The Lord Jesus consults the Father for all His decisions, and He will always follow the advice of the Father. 4) The healing of the two blind men shows that persistence in prayer is the key to receiving the mercy of the Father. The Lord teaches us that we should do the same. If we need help, we must keep asking as the Bible tells us. If a person keeps asking, the Lord will show mercy.

20¹ For the kingdom of the heavens is like to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

Comments 20:1. “For the kingdom of the heavens is like to a man, a master of a house.” Put your mind back to the beginning. Think that everything is from the Father, One in all, as the Bible tells us, and all in One. Everything that is talked about here in this parable is in the Father; He is the owner of all things (seen and unseen). Heaven, earth, and universe are in Him; in Him alone, all things have been created (See Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:15-17). “In Him,” think as simple as you have inside of you small little things. Humans are like dust in the eyes of the Father because all things are in Him; the universe itself is in Him, and humans cannot imagine how big the Father is, but even if we are small, the Father loves all humans. He sent His own begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, to take the form of a human; this has shown the love of the Father, but no human thinks of Him, and they don’t even thank Him. Also, the Father, when He created all things at the same time, He assigned duties and gave work to each individual, but when they go out and mingle with the world, the calling in their heart is hidden from them. Because of the worries of the world, the will of the Father in their hearts becomes hidden.

“A man, a master of a house.” The house belongs to the master; the master controls the whole house. All the power and decisions belong to the master, and the whole household will do as the master commands.

“House” refers to the throne of God (See Isaiah 66:1-2; Acts 7:49). Imagine heaven and the Lord sitting upon heaven with His foot resting upon the earth. Imagine the picture of the Lord with one foot on the earth, and where do you think His other foot shall be? The Bible is clear: you can’t imagine the greatness of the throne of God and how big it should be. All things are under His power because He has created all things. And think further that only humans have been fashioned by His hand; everything else was created by His will.

“Vineyard” in this verse refers to the seen world.

“Laborers” refers to those who take the tithes and live on the house of the Lord’s money.

“Hire” means calling from the Lord.

“Early in the morning” relates to the point of conception. The Lord will assign the calling of the Lord at the point of conception. Even at the point of conception, the Lord has foreseen the future of that soul. The Lord already knows that the soul will mingle with the world of the seen world and will let the call become hidden. The Lord places the call even before a person has been born (See Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16). The inner soul hears the

voice of the Lord's calling. Within the parable, we have various groups of people who will respond to the voice of the Lord.

This parable is a stumbling block for many people. Humans think only about the world they can see. However, the Lord of heaven is Lord above all, the seen and the unseen world. His vineyard includes both worlds, seen and unseen. He goes to the unseen world and gives all souls the knowledge of God (He created all things). That knowledge of God is considered in the human world as a calling to be in the world of humans. The purpose and calling have been placed in the vineyard of the unseen. When the souls go out to the seen world, all have the calling in them, but when they mingle with the seen world, it makes the calling become dim. But, it does not disappear; it is just dim. The Father sent the Holy Spirit to go out and work in each individual and help the individual find the inner call that has been placed in them. The chosen ones will find the path that has been put in them from the beginning.

² Then having agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

Comments 20:2. "Agreed" is when the person has made the commitment to follow the Lord. After agreeing for a denarius, the person gets the understanding from the Lord of what it is to be done.

³ And having gone out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the marketplace idle;

Comments 20:3. "And having gone out about the third hour." The hours mentioned, the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, are mentioned to let us know that God never stops working. Always, the Lord searches the hearts of all to find those who want to follow and find the will of the Lord for themselves.

"Standing in the marketplace idle." A person feels in their heart the call from the Lord but lets the worries of the world stop the complete follow from within the heart and lets their mind sway their heart and deter the action that the Lord has put in their heart. Being idle towards the call of the Lord is to develop thoughts that make the heart think that it is right to do whatever they believe is good for themselves instead of following the call from the Lord.

"Marketplace" refers to a certain point of time in the life of a person when a person reaches a situation to make a choice regarding the path they take.

⁴ and he said to them, Go you also into the vineyard, and whatever if might be right, I will give you.

⁵ And they went. Again, then, having gone out about the sixth and the ninth hour, he did likewise.

Comments 20:5. The groups of people hired at the sixth and the ninth hour fall into the same category as the ones hired at the third hour.

⁶ Then, about the eleventh, having gone out, he found others standing, and he says to them, Why do you stand here all the day idle?

Comments 20:6. "Why do you stand here all the day idle?" This group of people is a separate group. These have ignored the call of the Lord and got themselves wondering. They feel sorry, but no one is ever going to want them. This group is the group of people who believe they do neither bad nor good to anyone and have the right to choose for themselves what they can do. But they end up wondering; they don't find a place to go and end up standing idle in empty and dark places.

⁷ They say to him, Because no one has hired us. He says to them, Go you also into the vineyard, and whatever may be right, you will receive.

Comments 20:7. "Go you also into the vineyard." This saying shows that the Lord always gives second chances to everybody. As long as the person doesn't turn their back to the Lord and only sits idle in regards to the call but doesn't deny the existence of the Lord, the Lord will give second chances (See Hebrews 11:6).

⁸ Then evening having arrived, the lord of the vineyard says to his foreman, Call the laborers, and pay them the wage, beginning from the last to the first.

Comments 20:8. "Then evening having arrived." This compares the life of a person from the start until the end, and it marks the time to get the reward for what the person has been doing all day. The evening marks the time for the reward in the unseen world as a payment for the life that has been working for the Lord until the end of life (human life term on earth).

"Foreman" here refers to the Angel of the Lord.

Q: Why is the order of the payment starting from the last to the first? **A:** We humans have problems accepting authority, and it is in our human nature to think about what is fair or not. But the Lord is above all things fair or unfair; as the Bible tells us, the master has the right to do as he pleases. Here, the real purpose for taking the last

first is to learn and accept the authority of the master. If we love the Lord from our hearts, we don't care about being first or last or how much payment we get.

⁹ And **having come those** about the eleventh hour, they received **each a denarius**.

Comments 20:9. "A denarius" here represents the knowledge of who the master (the gift of knowledge) is and accepting the decision and authority of the master. In heaven, there is no disagreement from below to above; all must accept the authority of the master. We must accept the reward without grumbling.

¹⁰ And the first **having come**, they **considered** that they **would** receive more, **but they themselves also** received each a **denarius**.

¹¹ **Now having** received, they **grumbled** against the **master of the house**,

Comments 20:11. "They grumbled." One problem that we humans have is greed. Greed and power always play a big role over the minds about how to think what we should receive. Each individual made their judgment already of what they should receive. Even with having the knowledge of who the master is, greed still plays a role.

¹² saying, These last, have **done** one hour, and **you have** made them equal **to** us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.

Comments 20:12. Remembering about what they have done in their past follows their mind and shapes their greed to make them believe what they deserve and to make them believe what they should receive in the unseen world. They believe they did only good and their reward should be multiplied, but they need to remember what bad they did. The Lord can see all the good and bad an individual has done.

¹³ But **answering** to one of them, he said, Friend, I do **you** no wrong; **did you** not agree with me for a **denarius**?

¹⁴ Take **what is yours**, and **depart**; **now, I desire** to give **to** this last, even as **to you**.

Comments 20:13-14. These verses show that the Lord is just and fair. The reward is upon the deed of an individual. No one should complain about the decision the Lord has made for an individual.

The Lord gives one Bible to the whole world. Some choose to meditate on what is written, but some choose to read to kill time. You kill time, but you do not know that you kill your soul as well. The Bible is the food for your soul; you do not meditate on it, but you seek a reward. The just and fair is the Bible itself; all can have the Bible, but many don't use it. This is the fairness of the Lord: He gives the Word to all, bad and good. There is only one duty for everyone, and that is to read and meditate on the Word. No one can complain about the fairness of the Lord. All have the chance to get the food for the soul. But not everyone chooses to take the unseen food. The dark world uses other kinds of books to take the attention of the human mind away from the Book of Life. This is not the Lord's fault, for the one who did not want to take food for the soul made the fault. This parable shows this: the denarius is in the Bible. You can read, but you don't understand because you read with the human mind and you did not ask for understanding, but you hope to understand on your own. You could read the Bible all your life, but if you do not meditate and ask the Lord to guide you, you will not find the denarius.

¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Or is **your** eye evil because I am good?

Comments 20:15. This verse can refer to more verses from the Bible to support it. The Lord created all things, and He is above all things. Can the below, the created things, judge the above? The Lord's generosity is poured down on the below. Look around; even those bad enjoy all things the Lord has created, as it is written in the Bible (See Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17). When a created being challenges the Lord, it shows they do not trust the Lord.

¹⁶ **Thus** the last will be first, and the first last.

Comments 20:16. In the context of the parable "the last will be first," it refers not to the last that comes to the Lord but to the last who acknowledges the authority that is above all authority and believes with a true heart, even if it may take a long time to come to that point. This one will count as coming in first. But, the first that comes by mouth saying, "I believe, I believe," believing by mouth and not by heart, those ones will be last. The talk by mouth may be louder than the last who speaks by heart. [Whoever comes to acknowledge the authority of the Lord by heart is first, even if that person took a longer time to come to this point, not the one that acknowledges the authority first and loud but by mouth only.]

¹⁷ And **Jesus** going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve **by themselves** apart, and on the way, **He** said to them,

¹⁸ Behold, **We** go up to Jerusalem; and the **Son** of **Man** will be **betrayed** to the chief priests and scribes; and they **will** condemn **Him** to death,

¹⁹ and will **betray** **Him** to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day **He** will be raised up.

Comments 20:17-19. These verses clearly show how humans are. The destroyer has come among them. Not the gentiles that betrayed the Lord Jesus, yet His own people are the ones that betrayed Him to the outsiders. But all things must happen as it has been written; His own people flip over and betray the Lord.

²⁰ **At that time**, the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to **Him** with her sons, worshipping and asking **something from Him**.

Comments 20:20. The sons of Zebedee are James and John (See Mark 10:35). In Matthew, we see the mother coming to ask the Lord Jesus about her sons, and in Mark, we see the sons coming to ask the Lord Jesus about granting them the right to sit one at His right and the other at His left. Both Matthew and Mark are correct in detailing the events of this encounter. At first, the mother came with the request, and later on, the sons also came to ask. Here in Matthew, the Lord gives us the encounter with the mother of James and John, asking the Lord something. This event itself has shown how all mothers should be. For this mother goes beyond her ability to follow with her sons, the Lord has shown mercy to her, and He answers her request in the Bible. This shows the way the Lord created the relationship between a mother and her children (the mother should show love and concern for her children).

²¹ And **He** said to her, What **do you desire**? She **says to Him**, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on **Thy** right hand, and one on **Thy** left hand, in **Thy** kingdom.

Comments 20:21. This request really is not a request that should come out of the mouth of a disciple. But, even if the person has understanding, this is the human way. The Holy Spirit tells us in our hearts what is right and wrong, but we miss it many times. What we think (reason) always will come out first. The weight of the thought of reason is heavier than the heart speaking; always, the thought of reason comes first. The Lord allowed this request to come for the purpose of teaching us how to be among brothers in the Lord.

Q: How can we best connect the events from Matthew and Mark? **A:** We must understand that there is a short gap of time between verses 21 and 22. The Lord ignored the woman's question at first. Then the sons followed up with the same request (See Mark 10:35). Then the Lord Jesus answered to the sons and the mother in verse 22.

²² **Answering now**, **Jesus** said, **You do not know what you request**. Are you able to drink the cup which **I** am about to drink, and with the baptism which **I** am baptized, to be baptized? They say to **Him**, We are able.

Comments 20:22. “Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink ...” This cup referred to here is a cup of rejection by the world and abandonment of love from the family itself (i.e., heavenly family) (See Matthew 27:46). This is a simple cup for the one who gives the cup, but it is heavy for the one who will receive the cup. When the Lord was crucified, He carried His own suffering, but He took the suffering of the entire world upon His own death. No human can take that because it is too heavy for any human. If you want to follow the Lord, no believer can take this cup; we must only accept that the Lord has carried the cup of suffering upon His shoulders (Isaiah 53:3-5). But, even if all believers know this, they try to put it aside and acknowledge it by mouth but not from the heart.

“They say to Him, We are able.” This sentence shows the human mind and how the mind is. Because they want to do things even if they don’t know what it is, the mouth already speaks before they know what it is. As the Bible tells us, we will be judged by what we say, so do not let the words come out fast. You cannot swallow back the words after they are out, and those words will be used to judge you at the end.

²³ **He** says to them, **My** cup indeed you will drink, and the baptism with which **I** am baptized you will be baptized; but to sit on **My** right hand, and on **My** left hand, is not **Mine** this to give; but for whom it has been prepared by **My Father**.

Comments 20:23. “My cup indeed you will drink ...” At this point, they do not know the cup, but they will be part of it; however, they will not be the ones who drink it. The Bible tells us that they are with the Lord, and they will see the Lord be crucified, flogged, and treated as something, not like someone. They will see all, but they will not know the feeling.

“But to sit on My right hand ... by My Father.” This verse does not go against the Trinity of God. But, many people use this verse to discredit the Trinity of God; if the Lord Jesus is God, how then does this verse limit the authority of the Lord Jesus? That is their question. However, we must note that the Father is above all; Three (the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) are in One, but the Father comes first. The heart of a believer should always remember Three in One, and all believers should not put one above another; however, the Father comes first above all, but when we worship, we should always remember Three but One. The Trinity makes the Bible complete, and we cannot leave out any one of the Three (the Father, the Son Jesus, or the Holy Spirit), but the Father is first. Among the ones that call themselves Christians but do not believe in the Trinity, you should not have anything to do with them for they can be a Christian by name but not a true believer.

²⁴ And **having** heard, the ten were **indignant** concerning the two **brothers**.

Comments 20:24. This verse tells the readers that even between the disciples, sometimes it was not easy to look over the boldness of some. The request that was presented by the sons of Zebedee needed a lot of courage because the Lord was the Holy Teacher among them. For the two sons of Zebedee to ask this straight question, for the rest of the disciples showed no respect. Nevertheless, the Lord did not show anger, and the other disciples felt these two had more courage than them and felt uneasy about their actions.

²⁵ But **Jesus** **having** called them, said, **You** know that the rulers of the Gentiles **exercise lordship** over them, and **the** great ones exercise authority over them.

²⁶ Not so **will** it be among you; but whoever **may will to** become great among you, **let him** be your **servant**;

Comments 20:26. “Servant” here refers to the person who receives the order from the Lord in their heart to serve as the Lord Jesus came on earth to serve. Servant here does not mean necessarily to be a servant of men, but a servant of God and do work on earth in the name of the Lord; going to tell people the good news about the Lord Jesus coming on earth, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and waiting patiently according with the Bible for the second return of the Lord Jesus.

²⁷ and whoever **may will to** be first among you **let him** be your **slave**;

²⁸ even as the **Son** of **Man** came not to be **served**, but to **serve**, and to give **His** life as a ransom for many.

Comments 20:28. The Lord Jesus came to give the living Word to humans, not to receive. The Son received orders from the Father to serve mankind. The order for the Son was to come down to be born and live in the flesh and point the way for humans to come to the Father. God cannot serve men, but God that turned to be one hundred percent man could receive orders from the Father and serve mankind. The Lord Jesus opened the way by His death, but living on earth, He pointed the way to come to the Father.

²⁹ And as they **were going** out from Jericho, a great multitude followed **Him**.

Comments 20:29. Many, many things happen in one day. That is why the Bible tells us that not everything that the Lord Jesus did has been written down (See John 21:25). The healing presented in Matthew 20:29-34 describes a different scenario than the healings presented in Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43.

³⁰ And behold, two blinds sitting **beside** the **road**, **having** heard that **Jesus** is passing by, cried out, saying, **Lord, Son** of David, have mercy on us.

³¹ And the multitude rebuked them, that they should **be silent**; but they cried out the more, saying, **Lord, Son** of David, have mercy on us.

Comments 20:31. This verse shows us that persistence is the key to prayer. Even with being blocked and others trying to stop them, these two blind men did not stop asking for mercy. The Lord teaches us that we should do the same; if we need help, we must keep asking as the Bible tells us. If a person keeps asking, the Lord will show mercy.

³² And **having stopped**, **Jesus** called them, and said, What do **you** wish **I** should do **to** you?

Comments 20:32. This verse has shown to all humans how the Lord is. He is willing to listen, He just wants us to learn and ask Him to show mercy.

³³ They say **to Him, Lord**, that our eyes may be opened.

³⁴ **Then Jesus**, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and **immediately** they received sight, and followed **Him**.

Life and Faith Applications. 1) Christians should worship the God of Three (the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) in One. 2) We must humble ourselves and acknowledge the highest authority (Three in One) in our lives; we should not argue within ourselves when the Lord speaks in our hearts. 3) The Lord is fair and just; He gave the Bible to all people. We must meditate on His Word and not stay idle regarding the call the Lord puts in our hearts. 4) Persistence in prayer is the key to receiving the Lord’s mercy.