

BIG IDEA: Kingdom character doesn't produce kingdom conduct that expects kingdom privilege.

1) INTRO

- Last week: 1) Pharisees' & divorce (19:1-12)
 - 2) child-like discipleship vs it all figured out/down (19:13-26)
 - 3) Peter in 19:27
 - 4) JC “first-last”
- Matthew continues teaching about selfishness/privilege/position
 - Popular
- Late in his life, Winston Churchill took a cruise on an Italian ship. A journalist saw a story in this and asked the former prime minister why he chose to travel on an Italian liner rather than a British one. Churchill thought for a moment and then said, “There are 3 things I like about Italian ships: First, their cuisine is unsurpassed; second, their service is quite superb; third, there's none of this nonsense about women and children first.”
 - Wrestle w/ selfishness...kingdom people – battle/fight this

2) LABORERS IN VINEYARD (19:30-20:16)

- 19:30 - positions of honor/prestige in this life don't assure heavenly approval – “The Great Reversal” by Eugene Peterson and D.A. Carson
 - JC still addressing Peter's expectation God pay back generous
 - JC uses parable to show us
 - Tough only for those who don't acknowledge absolute dependence on God's grace
- Master of a house/landowner looking for worker during harvest
 - It's typical to hire extra help in harvest time
 - Picking rock
 - Landowner finding laborers for the harvest
 - 12-hr days...a work day from 6am-6pm
 - Landowner here has five groups of laborers
 - 6am, 9am, noon, 3pm, 5pm
 - Evening & time for pay
 - OT Law

- Each one a denarius
- Reverse order allows those who worked longer to see that everyone was paid the same
 - Those who worked longer expected to receive more even though it was agreed that they'd be paid a denarius
 - So, they grumbled & complained – “Not fair!”
 - “do you begrudge my generosity?” or “are you envious b/c I am generous?”...the lit GRK idiom here is “Is your eye evil b/c I am good?”
- 19:30 re-stated but reversed in order
- God is landowner; believers are laborers
 - Speaks especially to those who feel superior b/c of heritage or position – been a Christian for long time
 - Praise the Lord if that's you!
 - If not and you've come to salvation later in life, praise the Lord! We'll all be in Heaven together forever!
- This parable's not about rewards, but about salvation
 - Strong teaching on grace – God's sovereign grace
 - Been said that this parable has 3 lessons: 1) God is never unfair, 2) He is very generous, and 3) all disciples are fundamentally equal in his sight
- God is a generous God to all who call out to him by faith in JC – confessing that JC is Lord and trusting in/believing in his redeeming work on the cross
- Immediate context – Jews unfair Gentiles 3:00 or 5:00
 - Jews' privileged thinking...we must be careful too
 - God's gracious to bless all who call on him as Lord and Savior...including those who seem most unexpected to enter the kingdom of heaven
 - Reminder for those of us who've grown up in church
 - We're not more privileged
 - We're not better than those who God awakens on their deathbed
 - The criminal on the cross
- Praise God for when he does open eyes to our need for him!
- Two warnings to us – believers and unbelievers alike

- Believers – do you resent God’s gracious acceptance of the despised or outcast? Would you find yourself upset if that person who’s always treated you horribly comes to saving faith in JC?
 - If so, repent and ask God to help remind you that we’re all undeserving of his grace
- Unbelievers – do you put off responding to God’s call to salvation thinking that you can wait until your dying days on the hospital bed?
 - If so, don’t and respond to God’s tugging on your heart of your need for forgiveness of all the horrible things you’ve thought, said, and done
 - We’re not guaranteed to live another day
 - Cardiac arrest or an accident
 - Not a scare tactic, just reality
 - Please call upon JC to save you
- Salvation is by grace alone for all of us – it’s God’s generous gift of grace...eternal life through JC
 - When we believe that JC died, was buried, and rose
 - Which JC speaks of for the the 3rd time in Matthew...

3) JC FORETELLS HIS DEATH A 3RD TIME (vv17-19)

- JC predicts his passion/suffering for the 3rd time in Matthew
 - Saw earlier in Chs 16 & 17
 - Fullest details here
- JC speaks of how he’ll be delivered over the chief priest and scribes – Caiaphas and the leaders of the day – who’ll hand him over to the Gentiles
 - Before he rises, he’ll be beaten/tortured and crucified
- And, so with this ringing in their ears, the disciples abandon any sense of privilege or position they may desire in their hearts
 - Nah, they’re too much like us – and we’re too much like them

4) A MOTHER’S REQUEST (vv20-28)

- After JC predicts his death for a 3rd time, there’s a request
- At least there’s acknowledgement of the coming kingdom

- But, on heels of vv17-19 & earlier, this request reflects the height of arrogance & misunderstanding
- Mother of James and John to sit at JC’s right and left hand
 - Hold the 1st and 2nd most powerful/honorable roles
 - Sounds like a Mom, doesn’t it? The best for their kids
 - *Requests* this – doesn’t ask
 - Why is she asking? Why not James & John?
 - Culturally, in this time period, women – especially older women – could get away w/ requests & demands that men couldn’t
 - Seems calculated, doesn’t it?
 - But, there’s more...she’s his Aunt
 - Talk about a brash request...manipulation??
- JC asks if they’re able to drink of the cup that he’ll drink
 - Jews understood this “cup” reference as signifying the outpouring of God’s wrath (Ps 75, Isa 51, Jer 25)
 - This is the cup of suffering
 - And, even knowing this, their hopeful response to such positions of prominence is, “we’re able”
- JC ultimately says that they will have privileged position, and that it will be the privilege of suffering...just like JC
 - James would eventually be martyred (Acts 12) and John would be exiled (Rev 1)
 - They would drink the cup of suffering, but JC shows his submission to God the Father – that it’s not up to him to make decisions about leadership in Heaven
 - God the Father’s the one in the Trinity who does that
- And the other 10 disciples are “indignant” ...angry/offended
 - Not b/c they’re more virtuous but b/c they also want honor
- But, JC’s kingdom is an upside-down kingdom
 - In JC’s kingdom, leaders serve as servants/slaves b/c the King himself came to serve even to the point of death
- JC himself – the Son of Man – the one in Daniel’s dream who will rule and reign for all eternity came not to be served but to serve
 - And he came to give his life as a ransom for many

- JC shows that he will rule and reign by dying – giving his life as a ransom
- A ransom was price paid to release a slave & grant freedom
- The price of freedom from sin & condemnation is JC’s life given for us (1 Pet 1:18-19)
- JC drank the cup of God’s holy wrath – the wrath that we deserve – as the means of ransoming/freeing us
- v28 briefly & clearly expresses the doctrine of the representative, substitutionary, atoning death of JC
 - In JC’s “upside-down” kingdom his death gives us life
 - Bible Project - JC’s execution is JC’s exaltation
- JC himself – the ruling, victorious Son of Man – didn’t come to be waited on hand and foot
 - Rather he came to serve
 - He stepped down from his throne room in Heaven to die so that we wouldn’t have to
 - And, when we trust in our suffering servant – JC – we’re forgiven of our sins and free of sin’s reign and death’s grip
- Then JC shows his disciples – and us – that he came to serve

5) JC HEALS TWO BLIND MEN (vv29-34)

- Last miracle of healing JC performed during his life on earth
 - And he serves
- Two blind men call to JC - the Son of David - asking him for mercy
 - Jews knew that the Messiah would be a descendent of David
 - These blind beggars could see that JC was the long-awaited Messiah, while others were blind to his identity as Savior
- JC – who came to serve – serves them & grants the request of two helpless, nameless blind men who plead for his mercy; he heals them

6) CONCL

- May we not feel superior to others
 - Its tough when we’re a proud people living in a selfish world
- Kingdom conduct flowing from kingdom character should produce humble servants of God...not people who expect kingdom privilege
 - We don’t always do well in this, do we?

- It’s okay – I know I don’t
- And, so – in the midst of our failings – we praise JC for his forgiveness in that
 - Praise him that he forgives us and can give us his Spirit who’s constantly shaping and molding our hearts
- If the way up is to be lowly, may we be that – humble people who don’t jockey for prominence/position/privilege
- “Let Me Be a Woman” by Elisabeth Elliot – “Maturity starts with a willingness to give oneself. Childishness is characterized by self-centeredness. It is only the emotionally and spiritually mature who are able to lay down their lives for others, those who are ‘masters of themselves that they might be the servants of others.’”
 - JC is our example in this - Philippians 2:4-11
- Daniel