**Reflections-09-24-17**

Grace, Heaven, Theology of the Cross

*What’s the kingdom of heaven like?*

Matthew 20:1-16

1. Jesus tells his disciples a parable. He said that the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who hired some laborers for his vineyard. Have you ever thought of yourself as one of God’s laborers? What tasks do you think God has called you to do?
2. In the parable the landowner pays the laborers who worked 12 hours the same as those who worked one hour. Do you think that is fair? Do you understand why the 12 hour laborers grumbled? Do you think God gives us what we deserve or do you think God gives us what we need, even when we don’t deserve it?
3. Jesus said that in the kingdom of heaven “the last will be first, and the first will be last.” What do you think Jesus meant by that? How is this thinking different than what we see in “the kingdom of the world”?
4. Pastor Glen talked about the difference of “the theology of glory” versus the “the theology of the cross”. One theology has God in the middle where the other puts people in the middle. Do you think that God has more to do with your salvation than you do?
5. This parable represents a relationship with the laborers built upon “love” versus “the law”. The laborers who worked just a couple of hours get paid the same as those who worked all day. This is relationship is similar to how healthy parents relate to their children, loving the children who misbehave just as much as those who don’t. How does that make you feel when you see that God loves you with the same kindness and generous as you love your own children?

**Matthew 20:1-16**

20‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. 2After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; 4and he said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went. 5When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same.6And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, “Why are you standing here idle all day?” 7They said to him, “Because no one has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.” 8When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.” 9When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. 10Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12saying, “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.” 13But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?” 16So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’