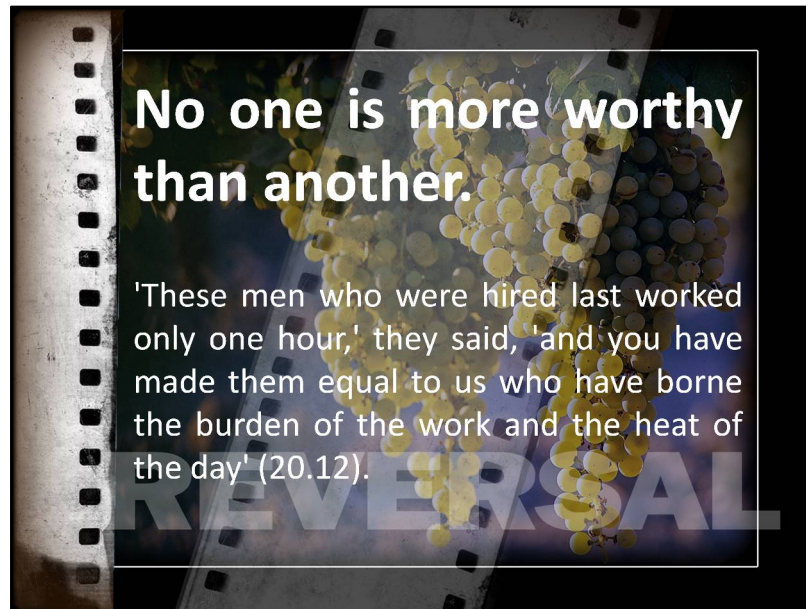
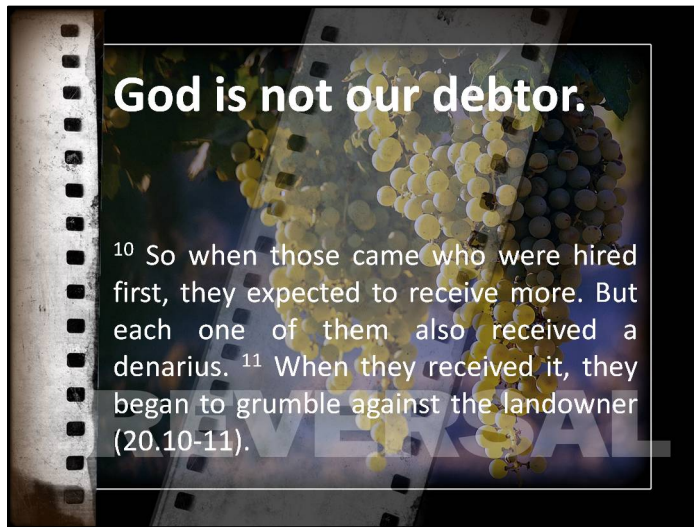




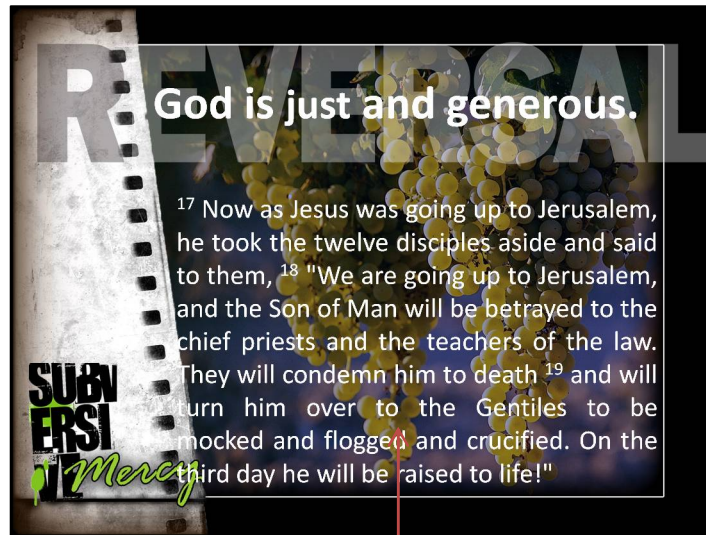
1. Introduction:
2. Remember the context of the disciples listening to Jesus talk to the rich young man, and Peter's question (We have left everything to follow you, what then will there be for us?), and Jesus' answer, 'You will judge over Israel with me, and then he generalizes it, it will cost many much to follow after me, but the cost will be not even a cost because of the return (eternal life with goodness 100 times over to cost).
3. Jesus tells this parable not to overturn his teaching on God's faithfulness to his promises.
 1. It is true the greatest sacrifice here will be seen as minimal compared to beauty and bounty of the new heavens and earth.
4. He tells the parable to overturn, to subvert the hearts of the disciples and any who would follow Jesus with them.



1. If you pay attention to this story, Jesus traps us masterfully, again, but in love. He is attempting to get at what is poisonous and deadly in our hearts.
 1. The way Jesus tells the story brings us to the point where we will readily acknowledge that the landowner did what was just, but there is also something about it that we feel in our hearts, 'yes but it doesn't seem fair.'
 2. What is Jesus getting at in this parable:
 1. "Little seems more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals" (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 303).
2. Jesus is intentionally dealing here with hired day workers.
 1. It is sort of like picking a team on the playground or at the gym. The best players go first, and the worst players go last.
 1. The best workers go first. They have a reputation, they have worked hard for others, and their good work ethic helps them get hired.
 2. The ones who are around at the last hour of the day are not good workers. The landowner asks, "Why are you standing here not working?" They reply, "Because no one has hired us!"
3. Though the first ones chosen worked longer and harder, they are still equal to the ones who work only an hour.
 1. They are all hired hands! Day workers. Dependent upon the landowner to choose them for work or else they are not paid, and they don't eat.
 2. The first disciples need to hear this, especially because of the honor given to them. They are still chosen, not because of their hard work, but because of the generosity of the landowner, the generosity of God.
4. Spurgeon an English pastor (1834-92)
 1. *The ability to serve God is the gift of God's grace.* I refer not only to mental ability; but to the capacity which men of substance have to help the cause of God by their generous gifts. It is God who gives the power to get wealth, as it is he who gives the brain to think, and the mouth to speak. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" If any here present are serving God with gifts and graces, I am sure that they must own that those were given to them. They did not win them themselves. Or, if some of them be acquirements, yet the power to acquire was given them of him from whom cometh every good gift and every perfect gift. Thus the ability to serve God is the gift of grace.<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/2221.htm>



1. Let's look back at the story. Why would the workers hired first expect to receive more?
 1. The landowner specifically tells his foreman to pay the last ones first.
 2. Because the last ones (who only worked an hour) received a full day's wage, the first ones hired were doing the math in their head, and figuring they would be receiving a great deal more than one denarius. They should receive 12 denarii, if the ones who only worked an hour received one.
2. In light of Jesus' promise to his disciples that they would sit on thrones with him, and that everyone who leaves much to follow Jesus, the temptation can come in to attempt by working harder, more and sacrificing that we will get God to be our debtor, and secure not just the promise, but even more from God, if we work harder.
 1. R. A. Torrey (1856-1928) once received the following letter (Borrowed from Boice, *The Parables of Jesus*, 62):
 1. Dear Mr. Torrey, I am in great perplexity. I have been praying for a long time for something that I am confident is according to God's will, but I do not get it. I have been a member of the Presbyterian church for thirty years, and have tried to be a consistent one all that time. I have been superintendent in the Sunday school for twenty-five years, and an elder in the church for twenty years; and yet God does not answer my prayer and I cannot understand it. Can you explain it to me?
 1. Torrey replied that he could explain it quite easily: "This man thinks...that God is under obligation to answer his prayer. He is really praying in his own name, and God will not hear our prayers when we approach him in that way."
 1. What he means by 'praying in his own name' is that by all this work, authority, or credit, he is trying to manipulate God to give him what he wants.
 2. What Jesus is trying to keep us from is leaving house, family, etc in our own name, that is in an effort to make God owe us, rather than as Jesus states in 19:29, 'for my name's sake', that is for Jesus' glory rather than ours.
 2. We can grumble as we look around, and see others receiving much, and try to get that by being really good.
 3. A lot of christian marketing plays into this as well.
 1. Follow steps, principles, rules, and you will have this and that.
 1. I know spouses that are angry at God because some christian marriage book promised, if you follow these biblical steps, your marriage will be transformed, and a friend recommended the book and his marriage was transformed, but God has yet to transform their marriage.
3. **Transition: Why do we try to make God our debtor? Why do we and are we tempted to manipulate God? Because we don't believe he is good. We don't believe he is generous and just.**



1. In this story, Jesus displays that the landowner, who represents God, is both just and generous.
2. Because God is both just and generous, we don't have to try to get God to be our debtor, and we don't have to try and position ourselves to be more equal than others.
3. But everyone around us, everything around us fights against this truth the God is both generous and just, that he is good and can be trusted.
 1. We don't have word agreements anymore, we have contracts and prenuptial agreements.
4. What we are doing though is trying to get God into a contract, when he has already entered into a covenant with us.
5. The covenant that God entered into with humanity, is a covenant that cost him, not because he broke the covenant, but because we broke. We have failed him, and he generously gave his son, Jesus to die for us.
 1. **17 Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 18 "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death 19 and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life" (Mat 20.17-19, NIV).**
6. In Jesus' death and resurrection God's great generosity is displayed.
 1. What more could he give us to show that he loves us intends good to us. If he gave his son, what would ever make us think that he will not keep his promises to us?
7. In Jesus' death and resurrection God's great justice is displayed. Sins always come with a price. With God the price is paid, justice is served, God takes it on. He suffers the greatest evil. And he forgives us for every sin or deed or heart.
8. The father of Jesus, our father if we are in Jesus, will never let us go. We need not fear nor doubt his goodness to us, though all life around us may scream God is not good, Jesus proves it so.
 1. Never Let Go: with a God like this, if we trust him, we can sing
 2. Blessed Be Your Name: If you find it hard to sing it, God wants to woo your heart. Confess your difficulty to him, and ask him for his help to sing this song, because of his goodness, he cannot be your debtor.
 3. There is no God like the God we celebrate here, that Jesus reveals. What will you do with a God like this? Keep him to yourself, or will you take him to the city?