

- I don't actually like the gospel parable today. My first reaction is to say that I am on the side of the workers. They worked all day and got paid the exact same amount as those who only did an hour's work. That seems unfair to me. I get it. The owner is allowed to say, this is my project, this is my vineyard, this is my building site, I can pay people what I want. We agreed on the amount I should pay. I paid you. You have no cause to say I cheated you.
- We have now evolved and to avoid any conflict in the workplace today we have labor laws. Now we get paid 10\$/1000\$ an hour. We know what we are entitled to. It is very nice of God to be so generous to those who did little to deserve his generosity but I have been working here for a long time. I have worked hard. I think I deserve more than they do. Because I have bills to pay I have to go out every day and earn as much money as I can. Because I don't want to experience injustice in the workplace, the truth is I watch everyone and everything. The first sign that anyone has unfair advantage over me, I take issue.
- I can say it another way, I want to work on a level playing field. I want fairness at work. But the truth is also, if the boss tells me I can use his executive jet for the weekend, I am not going to tell anyone about that. If I get a bonus for my work I am not telling anyone about that. Do you remember during our childhood that we were all hypersensitive about justice and injustice. These are my toys! You play with your toys and I will play with mine. At my birthday party I am the one who gets to blow out the candles. To make absolutely certain I push every child away from me so they can't spoil my party. The most frequently spoken word in childhood is "mine!"
- You watch children at play. Any sign that another child gets an advantage over me and all hell breaks loose. Every child has to be given the exact same thing. Every piece of cake must be the same size. Every candy bar must be the same one. There is to be no preference, no different color, no one gets more than the rest. Yet, if Mommy and Daddy give one of their children a piece of cake that is bigger than the rest, that child doesn't protest. You never hear a child say, "Mommy and Daddy, you gave me too much. That is unfair to the other children."
- We have a very strong sense of justice and injustice. We want things to be fair and even, but you don't hear me complain if I get a little bit extra. You can give me a bit extra, but don't you dare give anybody more than me. Jesus told the parable story about the King forgave his servant for his debts? The poor man begged for mercy and mercy was granted to him. However, ten minutes later that servant was screaming at somebody else who owed him money. When the King heard about it he was not very pleased. When it comes to what I think I am entitled to, I want the money, I want to win the lottery, I want the

prize. But, when it comes to what I owe somebody else, what they are entitled to, they can wait until I am ready.

- This parable is supposed to teach us something about God. Here it is. God is generous to us. God does not have favorites. If God has an executive jet, He is happy for us all to travel in it. God is not concerned with entitlements or showing favor. God wishes to help all of us in every situation. I think about Hurricane Harvey and the relief effort going on in South Texas, in Houston. I don't suppose the rescue workers are treating people who live in wealthy neighborhoods any better or worse than those who live in poorer neighborhoods. The Hurricane wiped you out. Let me help you.
- I found this quote from an Australian lady called Donna Goddard. Donna speaks to the world from the perspective of self-help and spirituality. I thought what she said was quite good. "Life is not a competition. No one has to lose for someone else to win. A true blessing blesses everyone. A fragmented love which makes others lose will eventually turn upon itself and destroy the very thing which was being so carefully guarded. An open-hearted love will follow a course which can only lead somewhere good."