

THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD WERE HIRED TO LABOR IN THE FIELDS. LABOR IS NOT REALLY WORK IF IT IS ENJOYED FOR THE SAKE OF THE ENDEAVOR. PAYMENT IS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOALS IS USUALLY IRRELEVANT, SINCE GOALS ARE CHANGED AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE SELDOM QUANTIFIABLE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IF THE GOALS ARE SOMEONE ELSE'S. FOR ME THE JOBS I DO AS A VOLUNTEER ARE MOST ENJOYABLE SINCE I GET TO PICK WHAT I DO. VOLUNTEERISM IS OFTEN CITED FOR THE GOOD FEELINGS A PERSON GETS BY HAVING DONE SOMETHING FOR OTHERS. I KNOW THAT WHEN I AM PAID FOR WORK, THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER AND THAT THE TIME GOES BY FASTER IF THE WORK IS SOMETHING I LIKE TO DO.

WHEN THE VINE WORKERS, IN THE GOSPEL, MURMURED BECAUSE OF THEIR PERCEPTION OF BEING PAID UNEQUALLY, IT WAS NOT BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T GET WHAT THEY WERE PROMISED. THEY SAW THE PAYMENT AS UNFAIR, SINCE THEY HAD WORKED ALL DAY AND RECEIVED THE SAME PAY AS THOSE WHO STARTED LATER.

LOOKING AT THE SITUATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE LANDOWNER AND THE LAST ONES WHO WERE HIRED, WE SEE THAT THE LANDOWNER WAS UNDER A SHORT TIMETABLE TO GET THE HARVEST IN FROM THE FIELD. PERHAPS THE FIRST WORKERS WERE GETTING TIRED OR HE MAY HAVE UNDER ESTIMATED HOW MANY WORKERS HE NEEDED FOR THE JOB. BY OFFERING THE SAME RATE OF PAY TO THE LAST WORKERS HIRED AS THE FIRST ONES HIRED, HE WOULD BE ASSURED THAT THE JOB WOULD BE DONE ON TIME AND HE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO ATTRACT THE NEW WORKERS.

WHEN I WORK AT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EACH SPRING, THERE IS OCCASIONAL MURMURING BECAUSE I EITHER FAIL TO ARRIVE ON TIME OR LEAVE EARLY, OR BOTH, BEING SURE TO WORK AT LEAST THROUGH THE FREE LUNCH PART. OTHERS ARRIVE AN HOUR EARLIER AND WORK TO THE END OF THE DAY, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE DISGRUNTLED PART.

I MAINTAIN THAT ANY VOLUNTEER WORK THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED IS HELPING TO BUILD THE HOUSE AND THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IS NOT IMPORTANT, SINCE THE PAY IS THE SAME. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUILDING A HOUSE AND PICKING GRAPES FOR A PENNY IS THAT THERE IS NO PAYMENT FOR BUILDING THE HOUSE, EXCEPT THAT AT THE END ALL THE BUILDERS FEEL GOOD THAT A QUALITY HOME IS AVAILABLE FOR A FAMILY THAT OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE A BASIC DECENT HOME TO LIVE IN.

A PENNY IS A VERY SMALL TOKEN FOR WORK, ESPECIALLY IN TODAY'S ECONOMY. EVEN IN THE PAST, A PENNY WAS A SMALL PAYMENT AND VERY DIFFICULT TO SPLIT INTO HOURLY INCREMENTS.

THE ISSUE IS RATHER ONE OF TRUST AND EXPECTATIONS. SINCE I DON'T DO PHYSICAL WORK FOR A LIVING, MY DAY IS SHORTER, BECAUSE OF EARLY EXHAUSTION. SO THE TRUST OTHERS HAVE THAT EVERYONE WHO SHOWS UP WILL WORK A FULL DAY IS VIOLATED. THEIR EXPECTATION THAT THEY WILL HAVE HELP ALL DAY BECOMES A DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN FOLKS START LATE AND LEAVE EARLY.

MARTIN MARTY, IN HIS BOOK, "SPEAKING OF TRUST", QUOTES PHILOSOPHER GABRIEL MARCEL, "TRUST, WHETHER IN ANOTHER PERSON OR, IN OUR CASE, GOD, CONNECTS WITH BELIEF. "TO BELIEVE IN SOMEONE, MEANS TO PLACE CONFIDENCE IN HIM, AND IS TO SAY, 'I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL NOT BETRAY MY HOPE, THAT YOU WILL RESPOND TO IT, THAT YOU WILL FULFILL IT'".

THOSE OF US THAT ENJOY LIFE IN CHURCHES ARE MOVED BY COMMON CONFESSIONS OF FAITH; WE PLACE OUR TRUST IN GOD, THE SACRAMENTS, AND THE CREEDS BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT OUR BELIEFS.

THE GOSPEL STORY SAYS, THE OWNER OF THE VINEYARD DECIDED TO AWARD EVERYONE THE SAME PAYMENT. THIS WAS A VERY BENEVOLENT ATTITUDE BACK THEN AND WOULD BE TODAY AS WELL. IMAGINE WORKING ALL DAY FOR, LET'S BE REALISTIC, \$150.00, AND HAVING SOMEONE COME AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY AND GETTING THE SAME PAY. THAT WOULD CERTAINLY BE A HEAD TURNING EVENT. WHAT IS THE DAMAGE? TO ME THE STORY IS SAYING THAT THE REWARD FOR YOUR LABORS, "THAT OF BEING A CHRISTIAN AND DOING GOD'S WORK IS THE SAME FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ON THE JOB AND WOULD ALSO INCLUDE THOSE WHO HAVE JUST JOINED THE RANKS.

WE AS MEMBERS OF ST JAMES NEED TO REMEMBER WHERE OUR TRUST IS FOUNDED. AS LUTHERANS WE HAVE ONE OF THE BEST RESOURCES FOR OUR FAITH; THE BIBLE, LUTHER'S WORKS, AND QUALIFIED PASTORAL LEADERS. ST JAMES ALSO OFFERS US THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK IN THE FIELD, HELPING THE HURT, FEEDING THE HUNGRY, AND SUPPORTING FOLKS WHO DO NOT HAVE AN ADVOCATE. BY TRUSTING GOD WE DO NOT GET ENTANGLED IN THE WORLD, RATHER WE ARE GUIDED TO SERVE THOSE WHO ARE VICTIMS OF SIN AND NEGLECT.

SATISFACTION IS ARBITRARY AND INDEFINABLE. WHAT SATISFIES FOR ONE IS LACKING FOR ANOTHER. THE GRAPE PICKERS WANTED MORE MONEY BECAUSE THEY PERCEIVED THEIR WORTH TO HAVE INCREASED BECAUSE OF THEIR QUANTITY OF LABOR.

IN LIFE WE LEARN THAT THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE. WE ARE NOT TO FIND SATISFACTION IN OUR DOINGS; RATHER WE ARE TO FIND WAYS TO END POVERTY AND UPLIFT MANKIND AS A PATH TO ENRICHMENT.

A QUOTE FROM "BUNAN", "DIE WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE AND BE ABSOLUTELY DEAD. THEN DO WHAT EVER YOU WANT: IT'S ALL GOOD." THE FIGURATIVE MEANING OF THIS IS THAT, WE MUST DIE OF OUR DESIRES AND WORLDLINESS AND THUS BE RESURRECTED TO THE LIFE OF BLISS AND UNDERSTANDING.