

WAGES OR?

Intent of the Parable:

- *God is just to all and kind to those in greater need.*
- *Do not be envious of those who have more.*
- *Everything you have – much or little – is a gift of God. Be grateful to Him*
- *Use God's gifts to the best of your ability.*
- *God gives His gifts as he likes. He knows why he does it*

The Parable

There was a rich farmer. He owned a large paddy field. At harvest time, early morning, he went to the market place to hire laborers, to work in his field. He told them: "Go to my field, I'll pay you a fair wage for the day's labor. What about Rs.200?" Gladly, all agreed on that pay.

He went out again to the market place at 9.00 o'clock. He saw some men and even women standing by, doing nothing, chatting away their time. He told them: "You also go to work in my paddy field. Be sure, I'll pay you a wage that is fair". So, they all went and joined the other laborers.

Then, at twelve o'clock and again at 4.00 p.m. he did the same. To all of them he told: "Go to my field, work hard, I'll pay you a wage that is fair".

When evening came, the farmer said to his supervisor: "Now, call all the workers and pay them their wages. Start with the women first, and those who were hired last. Give all of them a full wage"

To their surprise and delight, the women and those men who were called to work at 4.00 p.m. were paid Rs.200/- each.

When the men who were hired in the morning saw that the late comers – even the women - were paid Rs: 200/- they said to themselves: "Good! We shall be paid much more than them! But, when their turn came, they were given Rs.200/- each, like all the rest.

Then, they began grumbling against their master. "It's not fair!" They said to him: "Those laborers who were hired last, worked only for one hour, while we worked for whole day! How can you pay us all the same? You cheated us Worse still! What? You have paid even the women Rs.200/- each! How can you pay us men, the same wage you paid the women? You dishonored us!"

The Farmer angrily said to them: "How can you say that I cheated you? In what way have I been unjust or dishonored you? After all, you agreed with me to do a whole day's work for Rs.200/-, didn't you? Is it not Rs.200/- I have given you. Take what is yours and go home.

If I want to give those whom I hired last, and even the women as much as I have given you, who can stop me? Am I not free to do what I wish with what is mine? Why should you be jealous because I am good to others?

Adapted from Mt.20/1-5