

The Parable of the Workers

By Doug Irving & Gary Randolph



Theme and Purpose

This skit is a retelling of the parable told by Jesus, a parable we often find puzzling simply because the rewards for work seem so unfair. But if Jesus was concerned about fairness he never would have come to save us in the first place. Jesus' concern was about entering into relationship with people and teaching them how to live with as much grace as he did. Two thousand years later we are still trying to learn that lesson.

Cast list	Narrator: Distinguished story teller, modeled after Alistair Cooke Owner: A young entrepreneur who represents Christ First Worker: A faithful churchgoer Teenage Worker: A non-churchgoing type Other Workers (non-speaking parts): 5-12 other people divided among the four groups
Approximate Running Time	4 minutes
Scene Description	Narrator should be front stage left, sitting in an armchair and reading the story from a book to the congregation. The other actors will act out the narration at center stage. No other scenery is needed.
Prop List	Armchair or podium for Narrator. Workers could be given garden tools, or they can be pantomimed
Other Production Notes	Narrator should be dressed in a cardigan sweater with a tie or turtleneck. Owner can be dressed business casual in chinos and a polo shirt. The first group of workers consists of regular churchgoers. Consider short-sleeved shirts and ties for the men, dresses for the women. Workers in the second group are not churchgoers, but they look generally as nice as the churchgoers. They can be dressed in blue jeans and polo shirts. The third group can be dressed shabbily as drunks and street people. Dress the teenagers in current fashion. Dare to use black T-shirts, dyed hair, and temporary tattoos. We did this sketch at our dinner theater, and recruited audience members as the other workers. It was very well received.

Related Scriptures

Matt 20:1-16, Ex 33:14, Matt 9:12, Matt 7:21-23, Luke 13:34

Song SuggestionsWe Will Stand, Field of Souls, We are One in the Bond of Love

Owner stands frozen at center stage. Narrator, sitting in chair, opens book and begins to read. Owner and other actors play out the narration.

Narrator:

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a vineyard. Early in the morning the owner of the vineyard flung open the gates. In strolled the board members and the Sunday school teachers, who had already lined up and were ready to go to work.

Owner:

I'll pay you a day's wages for a day's work.

Narrator:

So they went to work on the vines, toiling beside the owner. *(pause narration to show workers at work)* About ten-thirty that morning the owner decided he needed more workers. He looked out the gates and saw some other people he knew well. Their parents and grandparents had worked in the vineyard years before. They themselves had grown up around the vineyard and were familiar with vineyard songs and the vineyard way of talking.

Owner:

Come join us, and I'll pay you what is fair.

Narrator:

So they set to work, too. *(pause narration to show workers at work)* That afternoon, the owner went out into the streets and found people who were just then getting out of bed. Some had been too depressed about the mess they had made of their lives to face the morning. Others had been drunk all night and were just waking up. Many of them had hit bottom and were looking for a new way. The owner saw in their eyes a desire to work, so he said...

Owner:

I need you in my vineyard. I'll pay you what's right and help you get back on your feet.

Narrator:

They all were working on the vines - the board members and the Sunday school teachers right alongside the drunks. And in the middle of them all was the owner, quietly moving from person to person offering a word of instruction to one and a gentle touch to another. Just before quitting time, he looked up and saw some teenagers hanging out on the sidewalk in front of the vineyard. They had funny-looking hair. Some even had tattoos and body piercings. The owner called to them...

Owner:

Why aren't you working?

Teenage Worker:

Cause nobody wants us.

Owner:

Well, I want you. And there's money in it, too. Come on in.

Teenage Worker: (*excited*)

Dude!

Narrator:

The teenagers came in and started working the vines. They hadn't been at it very long when the whistle blew to end the day. The owner called out...

Owner:

Quitting time. Time to get paid.

Narrator:

He walked up to the teenagers and gave each one a full day's pay. Then he called over the drunks and the people who had hit bottom and gave them a full day's pay. On down the line, he gave everyone the same pay. Then the Sunday school teachers and the board members looked at him and said...

First Worker: (*annoyed*)

Hey! Shouldn't we get a bonus or something? Do you know how many hours we've put in? What's the deal with giving us the same as everyone else?

Owner: *(amazed and saddened)*

You know, I really thought after working with me all day you would get it. You got the pay you agreed to. Plus we got to spend all day together. The time we had together - the experience of each other's company - isn't that worth more than all the money in the world? I thought you'd be glad that these others got to share in that joy, if even for just a little while. Can it be that you resent my love and grace?

Narrator:

Meanwhile, the teenagers beamed and nudged each other. That night they hung around the vineyard with the owner and ordered out for pizza.

Teenage Worker:

Dude!

Fade to black

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