

THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD



**THE DIOCESE
OF SHEFFIELD**
Renewed | Released | Rejuvenated



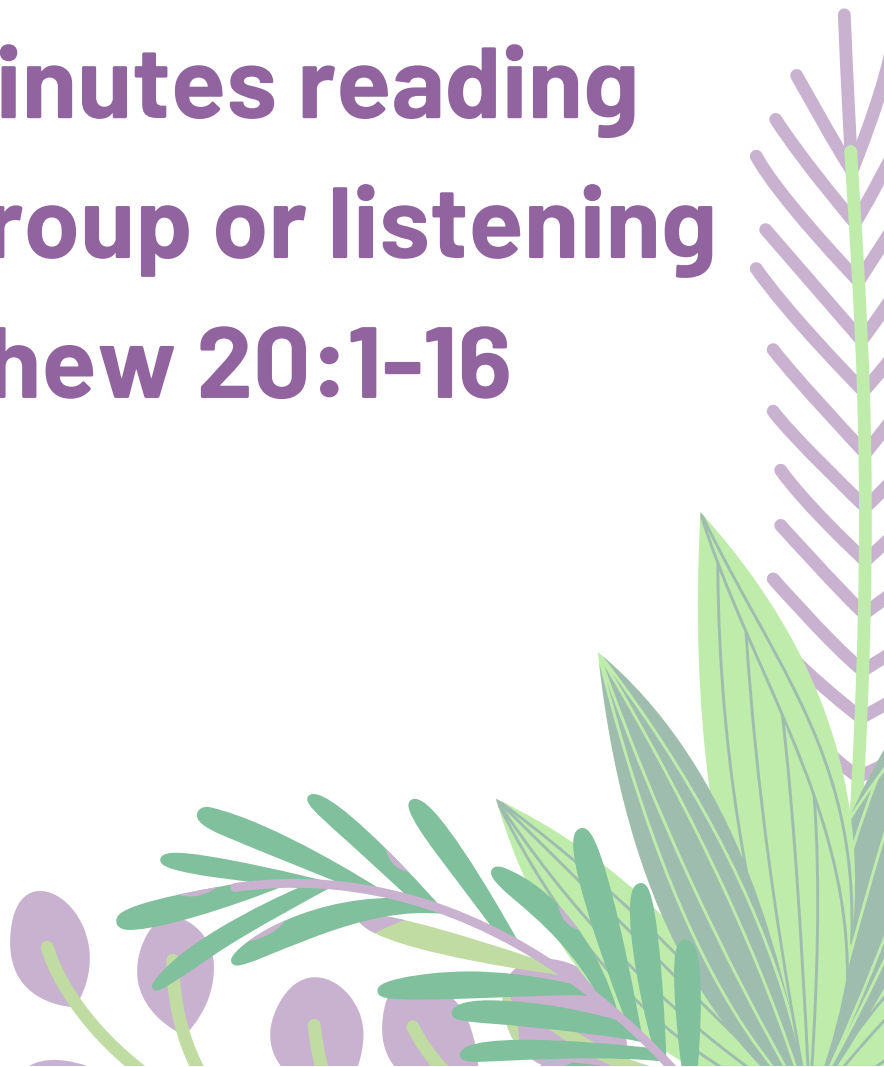
Prayer

Spend 5 minutes in prayer. Use this opening prayer as a prompt if you want a place to start.

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see and open our ears to hear where you are in these scriptures. We pray your Holy Spirit living in us would reveal its wisdom to us and point us towards you and how we may be generous and live generously. Amen!

Reading

Before you discuss the questions on the next page as a group, spend 5 minutes reading aloud as a group or listening to Matthew 20:1-16



LET'S *Talk*



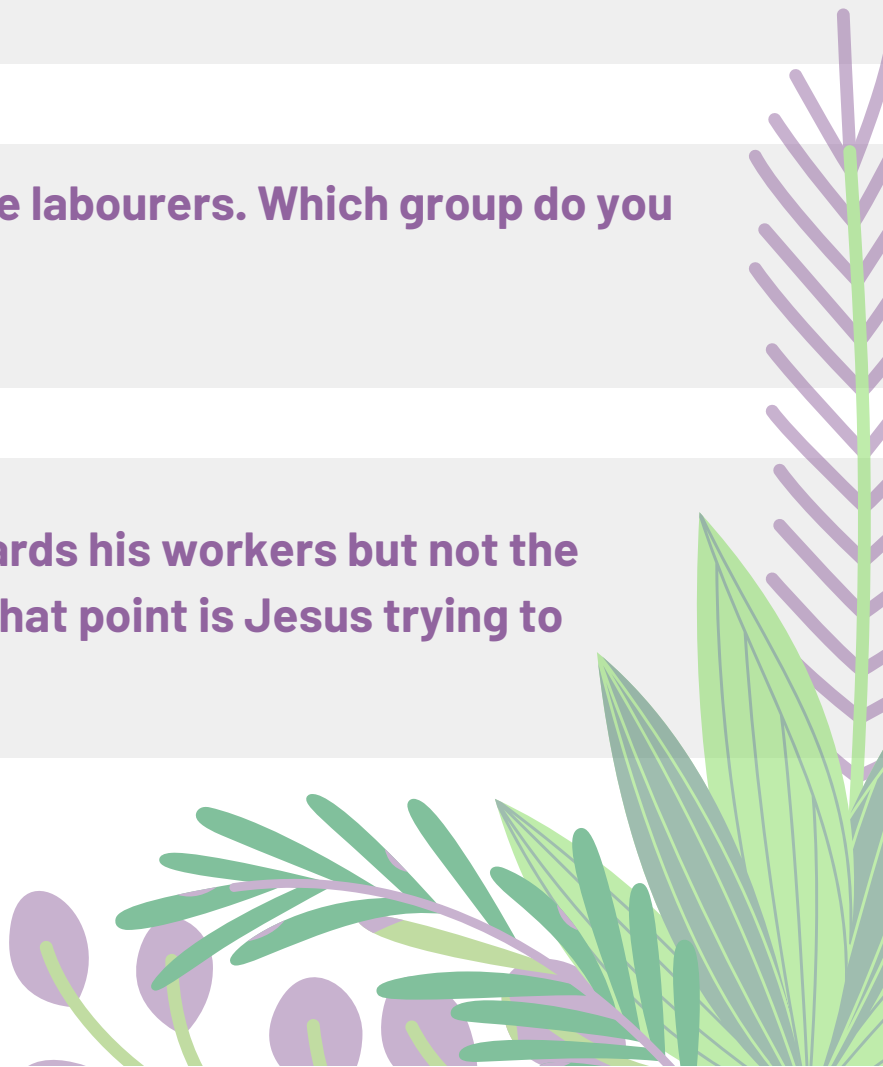
Spend 15 minutes discussing the questions below

Do you think the land owner was fair in his dealings with those who started early?

The labourers who came after 9 am did not establish a set wage. What do you make of this?

Put yourself in the shoes of these labourers. Which group do you belong to and why?

The land owner is generous towards his workers but not the way the early starters expect. What point is Jesus trying to make with his disciples?





Reflection

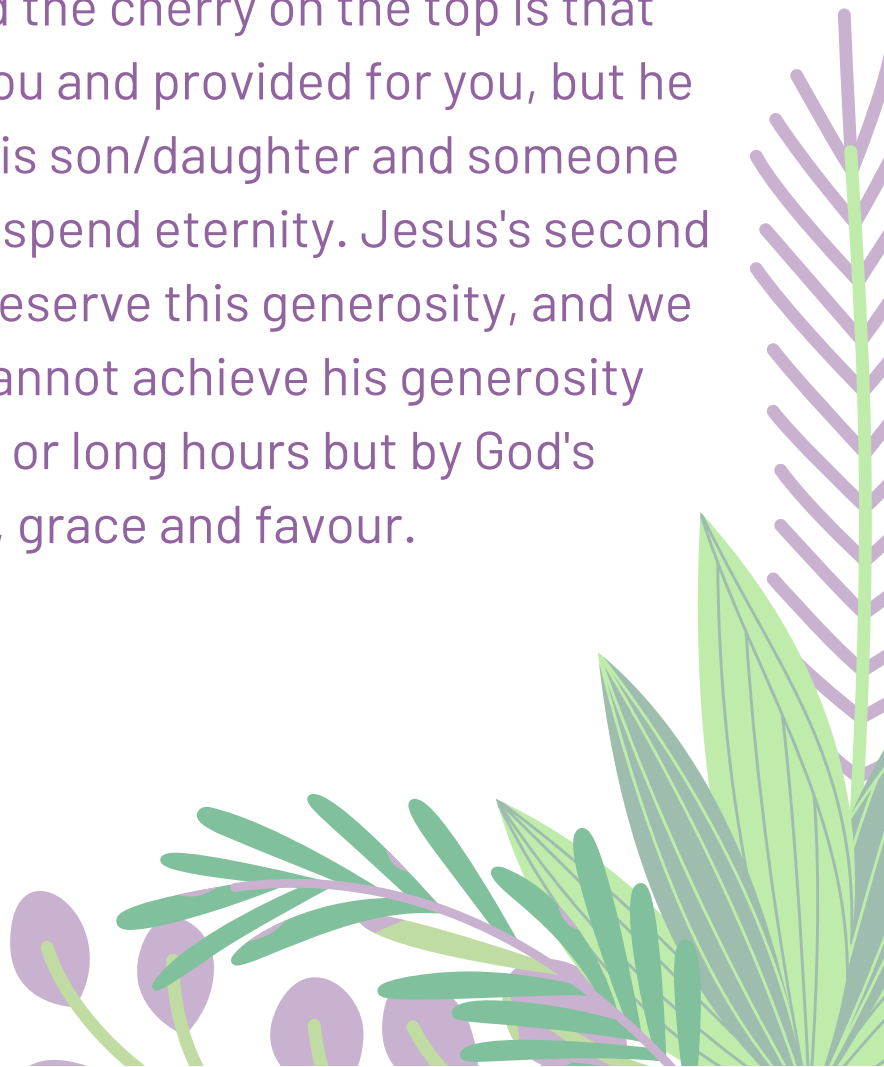


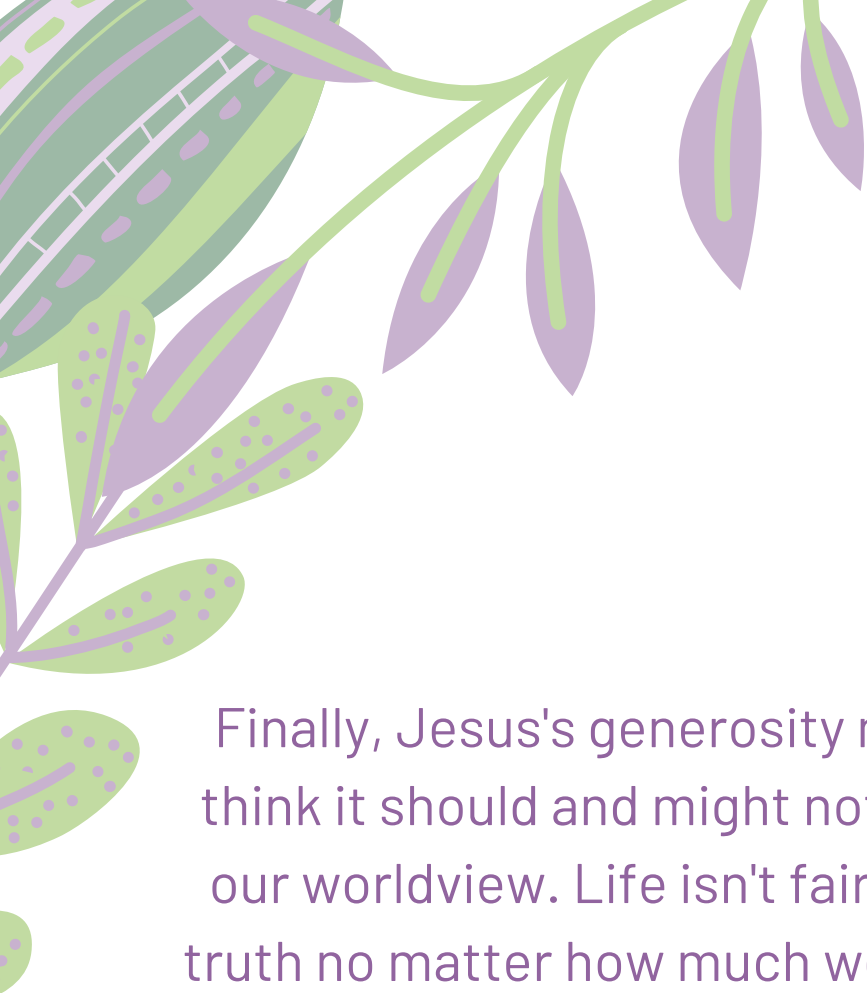
Spend 15 minutes in reflection as a group. As part of this time please read the reflection below and/or listen to the sermon from Mike North (Children and Young People's Adviser)

What does Jesus say about generosity in this parable?

Through this parable, Jesus as the eternal land owner, makes three points very clear to us about generosity.

Firstly, like each labourer's employment opportunity, this life each of us leads is a gift of boundless generosity. It is truly a miracle that we are here in the first place. You and I are a walking, talking miracle. The family you have, the place you live, any money in the bank are all gifts. And the cherry on the top is that Jesus not only made you and provided for you, but he also chose you to be his son/daughter and someone with whom he wants to spend eternity. Jesus's second point is that we don't deserve this generosity, and we cannot earn it. We cannot achieve his generosity through hard work or long hours but by God's generosity, grace and favour.





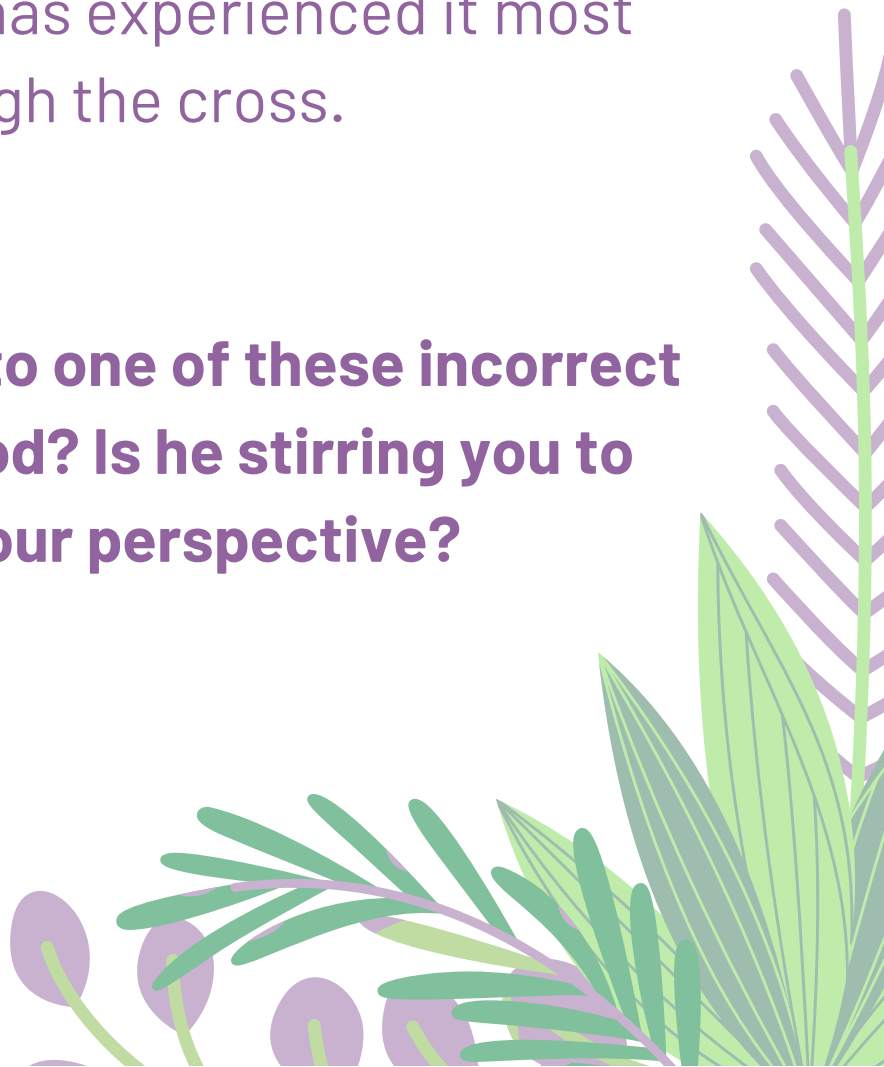
Finally, Jesus's generosity might not look like we think it should and might not be "fair" according to our worldview. Life isn't fair, and we all know that truth no matter how much we deny it. But life being unfair is not the same as God being unjust. God's justice does not work the same way as mine or yours. God sent Jesus to us to bring in this "great reversal" - to turn the world upside down for his good and glory.

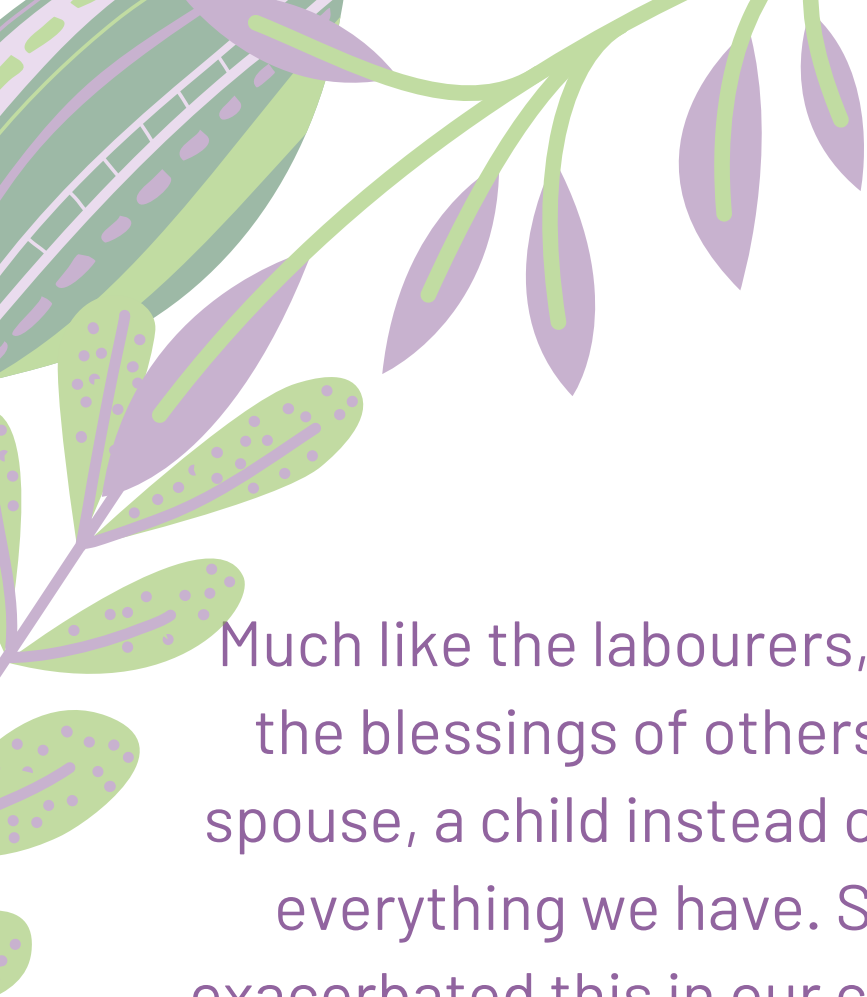
Through Jesus, the poor will become rich, the last will be first, and those who should be dead will have new life. This life and the next one are all a gift and, in a way, we're all late to the party, aren't we? In Christ, it's never too late to come home to the mercy and generosity of God.

How might we respond?

The way God works often seems at odds with our expectations or understanding of what is right or wrong. We usually take our successes as our own and the failure or suffering we experience as being from God. Jesus - the great reverser - shows us that it is the exact opposite - that all blessing comes from God. He is here to help you through battles and suffering as he has experienced it most through the cross.

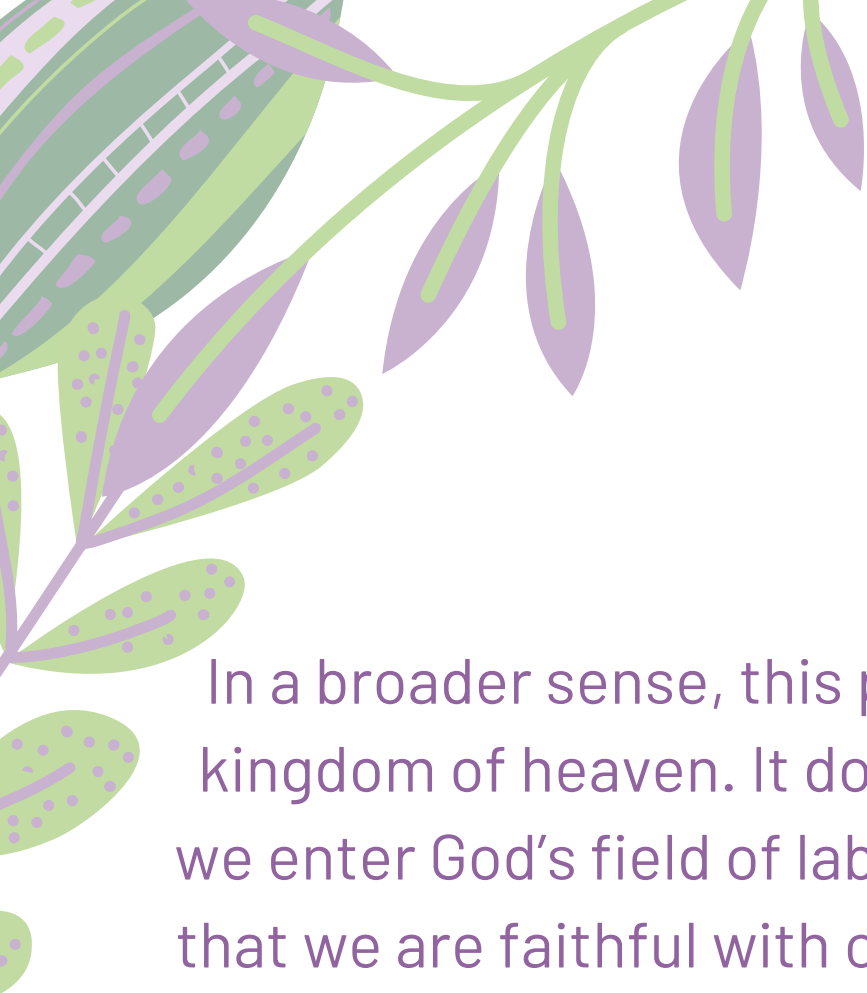
Have you held onto one of these incorrect beliefs about God? Is he stirring you to change your perspective?





Much like the labourers, we envy and covet the blessings of others; a house, a job, a spouse, a child instead of being thankful for everything we have. Social media have exacerbated this in our current age. Through this parable, Jesus is bringing to attention how damaging this comparison culture can be. He calls us live with an attitude of gratitude and celebrates the success of others.

Is there a way you think or act with envy towards others? What could you lay down before God today?



In a broader sense, this parable is about the kingdom of heaven. It does not matter when we enter God's field of labour; what matters is that we are faithful with our time, talents, and treasure when we do. God is generous and will reward all who do so.

Are there ways you can faithfully use your talents in your workplace? Could you use your time and treasure to build up your neighborhood?

Prayer

Spend 5 minutes in prayer and gratitude. Use this closing prayer as a prompt if you want a place to start.

Jesus, thank you that we get to spend forever with you. It is an underserved gift of boundless generosity, and we will be forever grateful. Jesus, we pray to see the world and others the way you see them – with endless love and a generous attitude. Show us where we can leave envy behind and where we can help build your kingdom here.

Amen!

