

WEEK 7: A STORY ABOUT FAIRNESS AND GRACE

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PREPARE

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MAIN POINT

The kingdom of this world is filled with comparisons and grumbling when things don't seem fair. To illustrate a value of His upside-down Kingdom, Jesus tells a frustrating story about fairness. Workers who worked much longer were paid the same as those who worked much less! The person on the group project who did NOTHING! Frustrating if you have not understood grace and don't trust the Master to wisely do what He wants with what He has. If you understand grace, you rejoice that the Master of the Kingdom we belong to is not fair. Wait, God is unfair? Yes, and this is good news for us, because fair means we get what we deserve and none of us deserve His mercy.

LEAN IN BREAK THE ICE

What was your first ever job? What were some of the pros and cons of that job?

LOOK DOWN LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read Matthew 20:1-16

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the workers on one denarius, he sent them into his vineyard for the day. 3 When he went out about nine in the morning, he saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. 4 He said to them, 'You also go into my vineyard, and I'll give you whatever is right.' So off they went. 5 About noon and about three, he went out again and did the same thing. 6 Then about five he went and found others standing around and

said to them, 'Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?'

7 "'Because no one hired us,' they said to him.

"'You also go into my vineyard,' he told them. 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told his foreman, 'Call the workers and give them their pay, starting with the last and ending with the first.'

9 "When those who were hired about five came, they each received one denarius. 10 So when the first ones came, they assumed they would get more, but they also received a denarius each. 11 When they received it, they began to complain to the landowner: 12 'These last men put in one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day's work and the burning heat.'

13 "He replied to one of them, 'Friend, I'm doing you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me on a denarius? 14 Take what's yours and go. I want to give this last man the same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with what is mine? Are you jealous because I'm generous?'

16 "So the last will be first, and the first last."

Read Matthew 20:1-16. How would you summarize this story in just a sentence or two?

What is the primary conflict in this story?

What does Jesus say in verse 16?

Why is our culture so concerned about fairness?

In his sermon, Eric talks about how God is unfair. In what ways is God unfair to us?

What is grace? What is mercy? How are they different?

When are you most tempted to forget about the wonderful, unfair grace and mercy of God?

How can the unfair grace of God encourage us as we try to follow Jesus in the routines of everyday life?