

THE GENEROSITY OF GOD

St. Paul in the second reading invites us to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel. Those words have always compelled me to strive to seek the wisdom found in the parable and the many ways to uncover our reaction as to what we are to do about what we just heard. In the Gospel the energy of the landowner going out to seek workers for the vineyard can lead us to the real generosity of the parable. At the end of the day, everyone who worked received their wage. Everyone was treated equally. Those who took the brunt of the day felt they should be compensated more and receive something better. Sadly this worker was a little short-sighted. He was only looking at what the wage was. The owner was hoping he would see the greater picture in which a difference was made in the lives of all. There is a difference between working for wages and working to make a difference. Why did the landowner go out at all hours of the day? What was he looking for? Even when he goes out at 5:00 PM he sends them to the vineyard, those needed help as well. The generosity of God has little to do with the wage. It has everything to do with allowing the difference in the lives of all to help feed their families, make ends meet, fulfill their responsibilities. To live a life worthy of the Gospel, we are called to make a difference in the lives of another.

When I was in Nigeria, I was staying in a satellite town outside of Lagos. A man came to the door wanting some money and was willing to help pull some weeds. I asked my friend Fr. Bill what he wanted me to do. He said to give him a few naira, which amounted to about 65 cents. The man was thrilled. That night he was at Mass, as all Masses were at night due to the heat. At every Mass they take up a collection because it is a response to our Baptismal call. That night, the person I had given the money to walked forward and placed money in the basket. I was stunned. After Mass, I asked the man about what he did. He said that he was thankful to God that his family had enough that day and he was giving back what he did not use.

It was an amazing experience. When we look at wages, sometimes we fail to look at the needs that exist past our own. The landowner kept going out over and over because he longed to make a difference and impact the lives of others. Let us be inspired not by making a living, but by making a difference. Jesus shows us the way.



Fr. John