

enjoying Jesus at work, blessing my life with his good, blessing my life by growing me so that I can go and extend the Father's kingdom.

Now that's a fantastic calling in life.

Everything else I do comes to a dead end. The Father's kingdom isn't coming to a dead end, but it will grow and thrive when Jesus returns. In Jesus, the Father has invited you to work in his vineyard growing fruit, fruit that will last. As I walk with Jesus, being lead by the Holy Spirit, encouraging people in their faith, praying for people, sharing about Jesus, being his witness to others, my life is being invested in the eternal. Do you want to be doing something of significance? Here it is; working in the Heavenly Father's

vineyard. What a joy to do work that is significant, having a real purpose and isn't just sitting around filling in time between the cradle and the grave.

That's what the people in the parable were doing who were sitting in the market place. Just filling in time between the cradle and the grave. The gracious vineyard owner kept going out and inviting people to come in and enjoy working in his vineyard. Even if it was only for an hour, he didn't want people wasting their life, but rather having the joy of working in his vineyard growing fruit, fruit that will last.

Thank God that in Jesus we don't just fill in time with amusing trinkets between the

cradle and the grave, but we have the joy of working with Jesus extending the Father's kingdom, making an eternal difference in people's lives. We too can sing for joy with the angels in heaven when a sinner repents and is reborn a child of the Heavenly Father. This week enjoy working with Jesus in the Father's vineyard, even if it is the pruning season. The fruit will only be all the more abundant.

Let us pray.
Jesus thank you for calling us to share in your joy, the joy of working in the Father's vineyard. Thank you that we're not simply filling in time to sharing life with you, as together we extend the Father's kingdom.
Amen.

18 September 2011

THE JOY OF WORKING IN THE VINEYARD

Matthew 20:1-16



In the parable of the workers in the vineyard one thing that strikes me is why didn't those who had been hired first enjoy their days work? At the end of the day I encounter someone who is disgruntled, even offended. After all they've had the privilege of using their day productively, with the promise of a reward Bonus upon bonus. But all I hear is complaining. 'It isn't fair, we've had to do all the work, in the heat of the day, we deserve more, we're worth more.'

What worth do you put on a human life?

I know that in Jesus, the Father has placed an infinite worth on each of us. Do we deserve it? Such a question only

reveals how far my heart is from the Father's heart. Love doesn't ask does the other person deserve it. That's just not in love's vocabulary. After all if you deserve it, then it's not love, it's not a free gift that has cost the giver so that I might benefit.

So what robbed these workers of the joy that the owner of the vineyard had hoped they'd experience as they had the privilege of working productively in his vineyard? Why don't we find joy but complaining? What robs us of joy?

Does Jesus want us to enjoy life with him, now? Does Jesus want us to join him in working in the Father's vineyard? Do you think Jesus enjoyed working

in his Father's vineyard? Of course, a million times yes. I don't hear Jesus complaining to the Father that he had to die. Now that's working in the heat of the day. So these sinners could be the Father's children. In a sense we're being made equal with Jesus, for in Jesus we are the Father's children.

Obviously we're not God, but in Jesus we are the Father's children whom he loves and delights in. Delights to share his life with.

Jesus could have got envious. After all it's not fair, he's perfect and we're not. Jesus had to taste the horrors of hell, and we get the joy of sharing life with the Holy Spirit, and the hope of life in the

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

Father's mansion. And we get it free, but Jesus had to pay a horrid crucifixion, feeling abandoned by the Father so that we might know that we're never abandoned. I never hear Jesus being envious and complaining, but always rejoicing with the Father and all the angels in heaven when another child is born into the kingdom.

Jesus life was a joy, for he was sharing it with the Father, living out what the Father had sent him to do. Gathering in those precious children that they might have life with the Father, growing to maturity as his children. Jesus enjoyed working in his Father's vineyard.

Do I? Do I enjoy working in the Father's vineyard? I'm sure the Father has called me so that I might enjoy working in the vineyard with him.

In the Old Testament reading for today I find the Children of Israel complaining. "In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron." (Exodus 16:2) Why did the Children of Israel grumble?

The surface cause was they had no food. Now

Do I enjoy working in the Father's vineyard?

starving to death doesn't really thrill me. But in this case when we take a wider look we find a people who have gone through some amazing events. They've seen the ten plagues, and have experienced winning their freedom, taking what they wanted as they left Egypt, no longer penniless slaves. They've just experienced the LORD'S deliverance as they walked through the Red Sea on dry

ground and witnessed the might of Egypt being washed away. Can this God be trusted? Has this God done all this only to let them starve to death now? Hardly. All this says; 'I'm the God you can rely on. Just call on me.' There could have been great joy, calling on the LORD and seeing him deliver them. Celebrating his goodness to them. But no, they complain.

What do I complain about? Can I rely on Jesus? What has he done for me, for us? What Jesus has done makes what the Children of Israel experienced look like an appetiser. Jesus is the main course. Can I trust this love, no can I trust this person? How would you answer that? I know I am tempted to lose the joy of working in the vineyard when I focus on making a living for myself, providing for myself,

finding my own self-worth, letting other things shape me other than Jesus. That's when I'll start to complain, because I don't have what I want. That's when I'll fret because all of a sudden it's up to me.

And the Children of Israel would have panicked, how on earth were they ever going to find enough food to feed a million people in a desert. That was the whole point, they couldn't. They had to rely on their LORD who had just redeemed them. Redeemed them to enjoy life together, trusting him with their lives. Sadly they didn't enjoy, they complained. Even when they got to the Promised Land they didn't enjoy life together with their LORD, they looked everywhere else and left him out in the cold.

Where am I tempted to leave Jesus out in the cold as I seek to build a

successful life for myself? Jesus' desire is that we discover the joy of living the life he's building. The joy of discovering life building the Father's kingdom. The joy of being loved by the Father in Jesus, so that we might be living from this heart of love, loving each other,

We've all got so much more to discover and enjoy with Jesus.

especially our sisters and brothers in Jesus. What amazing joy Jesus wants to share with us. What joy Jesus has for us as we join him working in the Father's vineyard. I know one thing that saps the joy out of life is when I have feelings like; I'm getting nowhere, I don't feel like I'm making a difference, my life doesn't count for anything, what's the point. Such thoughts

sap any joy out of life. Thankfully in Jesus such thoughts are lies. In Jesus I'm getting to enjoy life with the Father now and looking forward to hope of life in heaven. In Jesus my life does make a difference, because I am sharing life with him, and Jesus always makes a difference.

Jesus brings life out of death. As I walk with Jesus he's using me to bring his life giving presence to other people and into every situation I enter. In Jesus you're not just a loved person, but you are able to love as Jesus does. Now that's mind blowing.

We've all got so much more to discover and enjoy with Jesus. And when there is a testing time, I don't need to complain, like the Children of Israel. Rather I can talk with Jesus, ask, seek, knock on his heart, and what will happen? I'll be given the privilege of