



September 2020: WHOSE IS IT?

Written by Rev. Dona Johnson
Based on Matthew 20:1-16

Shaping a vision for generosity and giving is always grounded in this one simple yet profound truth — God who created everything, owns everything. Living a life of generosity is especially difficult because even though we may be more than willing to intellectually acknowledge God owns everything, on a daily basis we do not functionally live this way. As long as we live in the flesh, we have to daily wrestle with the lingering ghosts of our own selfishness. St. Augustine said it well, “God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them.”

In the Parable of the Workers. After a few disgruntled employees complain that they worked more hours than a new hire and yet all received the same pay, the owner of the business goes on to say, “What’s it to you. It’s my business. It’s my money to spend and invest anyway I see fit. Are you going to be envious and resentful because I chose to be generous? So, the last will be first and the first last.”

Jesus’ words “the last will be first” (Matthew 20:16), “whoever saves his life will lose it” (Matthew 16:25) and “if you want to be truly free, you must be a slave to all” (Matthew 20:26-27), echo the same trajectory. The human heart, our flesh truly struggles to let go. Jesus’ words require of us a self-emptying and a self-sacrifice. And yet our hearts cry unfair and unjust. I earned it all. It is mine.

Think about it for a moment, we are consumed with “this is mine” — my life, my career, my home, my vision, my church, my pastorate, my ministry, my investment portfolio and my rights. Do you see how this mindset, “this is mine,” is so embedded in our thinking that at times we don’t even recognize we’re saying such a thing — it is our default?

Shaping a vision for stewardship begins and ends with the generosity of God. God is Giver. Although he owes us nothing, God gives us everything and His giving is flawless. When we look at the parable of the workers, entry into God’s kingdom is not gained by how many hours we work, or how hard we strive to perfect and acquire more fame, fortune or power, entry into the Kingdom is solely by God’s generosity.

If you would like to learn more about building a culture of generosity in your community, watch for our new 2020 offering *RESET: The Freedom of Living Generously*. To be released soon!



September 2020: WHOSE IS IT?

Written by Rev. Dona Johnson
Based on Matthew 20:1-16

Shaping a vision for generosity and giving is always grounded in this one simple yet profound truth — God who created everything, owns everything. Living a life of generosity is especially difficult because even though we may be more than willing to intellectually acknowledge God owns everything, on a daily basis we do not functionally live this way. As long as we live in the flesh, we have to daily wrestle with the lingering ghosts of our own selfishness. St. Augustine said it well, “God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them.”

In the Parable of the Workers. After a few disgruntled employees complain that they worked more hours than a new hire and yet all received the same pay, the owner of the business goes on to say, “What’s it to you. It’s my business. It’s my money to spend and invest anyway I see fit. Are you going to be envious and resentful because I chose to be generous? So, the last will be first and the first last.”

Jesus’ words “the last will be first” (Matthew 20:16), “whoever saves his life will lose it” (Matthew 16:25) and “if you want to be truly free, you must be a slave to all” (Matthew 20:26-27), echo the same trajectory. The human heart, our flesh truly struggles to let go. Jesus’ words require of us a self-emptying and a self-sacrifice. And yet our hearts cry unfair and unjust. I earned it all. It is mine.

Think about it for a moment, we are consumed with “this is mine” — my life, my career, my home, my vision, my church, my pastorate, my ministry, my investment portfolio and my rights. Do you see how this mindset, “this is mine,” is so embedded in our thinking that at times we don’t even recognize we’re saying such a thing — it is our default?

Shaping a vision for stewardship begins and ends with the generosity of God. God is Giver. Although he owes us nothing, God gives us everything and His giving is flawless. When we look at the parable of the workers, entry into God’s kingdom is not gained by how many hours we work, or how hard we strive to perfect and acquire more fame, fortune or power, entry into the Kingdom is solely by God’s generosity.

If you would like to learn more about building a culture of generosity in your community, watch for our new 2020 offering *RESET: The Freedom of Living Generously*. To be released soon!