

# The Parable of the Owner of the Vineyard

## MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Equality is highly prized in today's world. Many societies and governments are built upon the premise that all people are endowed with an essential dignity and equality. Yet, concepts like equality and fairness are sometimes pushed to an extreme degree. Consequently, it can be highly controversial to claim, as the Bible does, that God does not extend grace and mercy to all people in the same way. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul will examine the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 20, explaining that it is God's sovereign prerogative to have mercy on whom He will have mercy.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 20:1-16

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To present and exegete the parable of the owner of the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16.
2. To examine the implications of God's sovereignty.
3. To differentiate between different categories of justice and non-justice.
4. To proclaim God's holiness and abundant mercy in electing undeserving sinners to salvation.

## QUOTATIONS

*Men have no right to complain of the bounty of God, when he honors unworthy persons by large rewards beyond what they deserve.* –John Calvin

*We see one man called to repentance and faith in the beginning of his days like Timothy, and labouring in the Lord's vineyard for forty or fifty years; we see another man called "at the eleventh hour," like the thief on the cross, and plucked like a brand out of the fire—one day a hardened impenitent sinner, and the next day in paradise. And yet the whole tenor of the Gospel leads us to believe that both are equally forgiven before God.* –J.C. Ryle

## BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to say that God is sovereign? Do you struggle with this doctrine, or do you find it easy to accept? Why is this so?
2. In your own words, describe the difference between justice and non-justice. When is it desirable to receive justice? When is it desirable not to receive justice?
3. Are all forms of non-justice the same? Explain. How has God treated you non-justly?
4. Dr. Sproul reminds us that most parables only have one meaning. After reflecting on the parable of the vineyard owner, what would you say is the meaning of this parable? What are some of the possible applications that this parable can have?