



Posted on August 23, 2026
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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for September 20, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 20:1-16](#) [**Summary:** *Overlooking The Good News*]

Supplies Needed:

- You will need two stickers to give away to each child.
- You will then need 8 more stickers to give away to two adults (4 per adult).
- If your worship service does not usually have extra adults join the children for the children's message, then you'll want to recruit two adults to join you for this one. You'll also want to inform them that you will be giving them stickers and then needing those stickers returned to you as part of their role.

ASK (a.k.a [The On-Ramp](#))

- Good morning!
- Today, I want to thank you for attending today's Children's Time.
- To thank you, I am going to give each of you two stickers.
- What do you think about that? That's a pretty nice thing for me to do, isn't it?
- Do you agree that it's pretty nice for me to do?
- And now, I'm going to give these two adults who are attending Children's Sharing Time FOUR stickers each.
- *[Optional line depending on your relationship with the two adults: I'm giving the adults more stickers because they are older and bigger and it takes more effort for them to get up here.]*
- So, do you think that's fair – that they get four stickers and you get two stickers? (No!)
- Do their four stickers make you less thankful that you received only two stickers? (Yes!)
- Do you think I'm less nice, now, than I was earlier? (Yes!)
- But why? The nice thing that I did for you didn't change! (But you were nicer to the other people!)?
- OK, so what if I tell the adults to give the stickers back to me *[have adults hand back the stickers to you]*, but you get to keep your two stickers – would you think I was nice again? (Maybe...)

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- In today's scripture story, Jesus tells a story of a landowner who hires workers and tells them when he hires them, "I will pay you whatever is right."
- Then at the end of the day, the owner does exactly what he said he'd do, he pays the workers what is right; he pays them fairly.
- So, you *might* think that the workers would be happy get fairly paid for their work, right?
- But, they are not happy. In fact, many of them are upset!
- The reason they are upset is because there were some other workers that started working later in the day, but they got paid the same amount as the first workers did!
- In other words, the second set of workers received the same amount of money for doing less work. Or put another way, the second set of workers were paid even more fairly than the first set of workers.
- The first set of workers thought this was unfair and were upset.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- To review, if the first set of workers had *only* paid attention to what the landowner had given them, they would've been very pleased with what had happened.
- But, instead, the first set of workers paid attention to what the landowner gave the *second* set of workers, just like you paid attention to how I gave four stickers to the adults.
- Because the first set of workers were soooo worried about the other workers, they missed out on the good news for themselves.
- They missed out on the good news that they had been treated very well and very fairly by the land owner.
- And, that *is* the Good News for today: God loves us and treats us very well, just like the landowner treated all of the workers and just like I treated you.
- BUT, here are some words of warning to go along with today's good news: If we decide to focus on what *other* people are getting, then we will miss out on the good news that is available to *us*.
- Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Thank you for Jesus...

...who teaches us...

...who teaches us...

...how to notice what you offer us.

...how to notice what you offer us.

Thank you for loving us.

Thank you for loving us.

We love you, too.

We love you, too.

Thank you and Amen