

SPR | September 20, 2020 | Liz Koerner

May I speak in the name of the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, Mother of us All. Amen

The last shall be first and the first shall be last.

In today's gospel we hear of folks who were day laborers in a vineyard. They expected a certain days wage for working the whole 12 hour day. They agreed to that wage at the beginning of the day with the owner of the vineyard. But throughout the day, their employer found more and more people to work the fields. Even those who only worked an hour received the same days wage. Now, in our world and our economy, if someone were to get the same pay for less work, we would rightly fight back, and be angry. Because it's not fair. But it's only not fair when you analyze it in terms of earthly means. What if you looked at the hours worked in terms of how long a person has had faith in God. Would you tell someone who was new here at SPR, that because they were new, they therefor didn't deserve God's love as much as the person who has been a member their whole life? I wouldn't think so.

In earthly means, we need money to purchase food, shelter, clothing; everything in our society comes with some price tag attached to it. And those who work longer have earned money longer and have more experience get more than others. Because they've theoretically earned it.

But not in God's world.

God's economy is different.

It has been said, in God's economy there is no such thing as a favored nation clause. Seniority in the church isn't equivalent to earning more honor, or more love from God, or more say in the work we do, or what is right. We know that we all worship differently, experience God differently, and grow differently in our faith. But different doesn't mean less than or better than. It means more opportunity of ideas to work towards a space that looks more like God's economy. Where, God, as the distributor of love and grace has infinite resources and gives them to all who seek them or are in need of them.

In our world right now, there are people who are treated as less than because of who God created them to be. We know this isn't what God's vision looks like. WE know because we have read the parables, and heard Christs teachings and know the God we worship to be a God of peace. Acceptance. Love. A currency that doesn't need to be distributed fairly, but unconditionally.

When Pastor Catherine asked me to preach for this Sunday, our virtual, youth Sunday, I was excited for the opportunity, but also nervous. Nervous because I knew the traditions of the

youth being the ones to preach, and telling their stories last year after the mission trip they had gone on just a month earlier. This year, there was no mission trip as we had hoped. But the youth were still doing the work of caring for all God's people in the world. The youth were writing letters to elected officials, signing petitions, were out on the streets protesting for the rights of those in most need. Whether they realize it or not, they are fighting for the equity and justice that can be seen in God's economy. Would we tell our youth that because they are so young, that their ideas and understanding of church and the world are less than? Or because we as adults in the church have been members our whole lives, that we know better than they do? Because, guess what folks, our youth have been members their whole lives too. They may have been on this earth a shorter time than you have, but in the Christian church, seniority doesn't necessarily mean more honor, or more righteousness, or more love from God. It means we all have the opportunity to grow together, learn together, and create a world where outside of the societal worldly economy, we can offer the grace that God has promised limitlessly and unconditionally. I am proud to lead these youth, because they teach me every week what it can be like to live out our faith and care for God's creation. I pray we all have the openness in our hearts to see the future they want to create for our world, and we can work together to remember the unending grace and mercy promised to us by God; New or old, long time member, or new members stumbling upon our service recordings, 10 years old or 95 years old. We are here to show the world God has promised, where the last can be first, and the first can be last, because there is more than enough grace for everyone. Amen.