

**What is it we truly want out of life?**

**How do we measure these things?**

**In our readings we hear that God's ways are not our ways**

**This is true on so many levels**

**But it isn't something that is true just for us today**

**It has always been that way**

**This is really at the core of original sin**

**When Adam and Eve desired things their own way**

**And turned from God**

**In our first reading Isaiah was calling the people back to God**

**Let the scoundrels forsake their ways**

**And the wicked their thoughts**

**Through Isaiah, God is inviting them into a conversion of heart**

**God invites each of us into that conversion at each moment**

**Like Adam and Eve**

**These people once had a relationship with God**

**And God desires that relationship, that covenant, to be restored**

**The people of Isaiah's time have turned from God's law**

**They have made plans contrary to His plans**

**But God has compassion on them**

**If they will only turn back to him**

**With their minds and actions**

**Matthew puts this in a different context**

**One that every one of us can relate to**

**Because we all know what it is to seek work**

**Even if we have a job**

**We can relate to those without**

**At the time of Christ, it wasn't like today**

**There was little permanent employment**

**Men would gather in the town square**

**And wait for someone needing workers**

**There would be a normal wage for a day's labor**

**Not an hourly wage we are used to**

**They would be paid in the evening for their day's work**

**Then the next day do it all over again**

**For them it was a matter of survival for themselves and their families**

**But this parable shows a critical difference**

**God's ways are not our ways**

**For most of them**

**Whether landowners or workers, it was a matter of survival**

**The landowners wanted the most labor for their wages**

**The workers wanted the most for their labor**

**So it would be natural for the workers to act as they did**

**Those hired early in the day**

**Bearing the day's heat and spending the most time in the field**

**They see those hired at the end of the day getting a full wage**

**It would be normal for them to expect a bonus**

**But this isn't about human justice**

**It is about God's love**

**It is about what God desires**

**But it's not fair!**

**A common human response to a multitude of events in our lives**

**Kind of reminds me of a story I once heard**

**A jetliner flying across country**

**The engines go out**

**The pilot comes on the radio**

**We have bad news and good news**

**The engines have gone out, and the plane is going down**

**The good news is we have a shipment of parachutes on board**

**Enough for every passenger and crew**

**The crew will help get you fitted, and then we will all jump**

**So they get lined up**

**And one person says they are all green**

**I want a colorful one, or I am not taking one at all**

**Another person comes up**

**All I have are flip-flops**

**I need some boots, or I am not going to jump**

**Another comes up**

**I paid for a ticket to New York**

**You can't make me jump out over Illinois**

**How will I get to New York by 5:00?**

**The crew offered a way for all of them to be saved**

**And yet for one reason or another, it wasn't fair!**

**They could all be saved**

**But many wanted to be saved their way**

**They wanted it to be fair**

**But the pilot was not so concerned with the perceived fairness**

**Neither is our Landlord**

**He goes out and hires workers early in the morning**

**Then four more times during the day**

**He goes to the courtyard and hires workers**

**Sending them to his vineyards**

**Then when it is time for their pay**

**He tells his foreman**

**Pay those hired last first**

**Why?**

**Chances are, if he paid those hired in the morning first**

**They would have been gone before seeing what he paid the others**

**He isn't concerned with being fair**

**At least on our terms**

**He is concerned with the person in front of him**

**The centerpiece of our salvation is a relationship**

**How God sees this and how we see it are not necessarily the same**

**How often is a relationship only for what I get out of it?**

**How many of our relationships are calculating?**

**It seems cold, doesn't it?**

**But in today's culture**

**Even our most prized relationship, marriage**

**Is often seen as what's good for me?**

**No fault divorce**

**I will stay as long as my needs are met**

**As long as he/she provides what I need**

**We hear of people serving in the military**

**Not for love of country**

**But for the resume**

**Where it can lead in jobs or politics**

**Or friendships**

**Commitment for what I can get out of it**

**Social impressions or business connections**

**Any of these can be focused on the self**

**Rather than on the other person**

**Whether that other person is my spouse or a buddy**

**We can even try to manipulate our relationship with God**

**If I am good, he will protect my family**

**Or He will give me a long life**

**He will provide for me**

**Either spiritually, materially or my health**

**I will get something out of my relationship with Him**

**But God doesn't look at relationships that way**

**There is nothing that we can do or offer that will add to God**

**He simply wants a relationship with us**

**So He can give us what He has, what He is:**

**Life**

**He doesn't automatically give us our desires**

**He gives us what He desires**

**And He doesn't want our love in return for things we received**

**Look at Scripture**

**Humanly speaking, did Job receive only good things from God?**

**Did Abraham, Moses or David?**

**How about Peter or Paul or any disciple?**

**At times He may give consolations**

**At times desolations**

**We are called to see these, to notice them**

**And then let them go**

**Because they both come from God**

**But they are not God**

**So we have a choice to make in our relationship with God**

**It can be a calculating relationship**

**One like the day workers in our Gospel**

**Or it can be a relationship of love**

**Like the one the landlord desired**

**So no matter if we come to work early or late**

**It is not about what we can earn for him**

**But the simple fact that we are His children**

**And our love given in return to the Love we have received**

**There is one thing the day workers got right**

**It is not fair**

**But not in the way they calculated**

**We give a finite bit of human love**

**And in return, we receive God's infinite generosity, forgiveness  
and love**

**And that is an offer that can never be fair**

**Because God's ways are not our ways**