

Chat with Children

- Running on the spot for a period of time:
 - will pay you in chocolate...
 - someone who'd like to have a go...
 - get someone else up after a while, shorter time...
 - pay you what is fair...
- Large bar of chocolate as reward/payment
 - share out unfairly - everyone the same, no matter how much work they've done...

God is Bad at Maths

- *Image: quadratic equation solution*
- Colin/Agnes, different subjects, things we dread.
 - competition, being better at some things than others, maths lessons even I used to dread...
- God is atrocious at maths!
- *Image: Yancey book cover*
- Philip Yancey in his book "[What's so amazing about grace?](#)" highlights a number of Jesus' parables and some of his teaching that makes this point clear:
 - and one of the parables he picks out is this one!
- God's maths is just not up to scratch!

Workers in the Vineyard

- *Retell story with colour and detail. Image: two workers*
 - harvest -> busy
 - casual labour - marketplace - come and hire your workers
 - going rate would have been one silver coin; fair, not overly generous
 - times: 6am, 9am, 12noon, 3pm, 5pm
 - working day ended at sunset, 6pm, and that was when everyone was paid - money not held over till the next day... hand to mouth!!
 - hadn't agreed an actual price ("what is right") with later labourers.
 - lazy bones and good for nothings left at 5pm!
- Picture scene as the working day draws to a close:
 - early workers have looked on as others have joined them in the field...
 - small communities - would have known who they were, what they were like;
 - possible they would have resented the implied criticism of their work?
- Everyone gets the same amount!
 - hot, weary, hard-workers.... chancers and malcontents - all the same!
 - reminds me of the second son in Jesus' story about the prodigal - one who was left behind, resented his father's forgiving and generous welcome home!

Grace is Unfair

- *Image: fish in mismatch bowls*
- Reminder is not accidental:
 - for that son, and those early labourers, are thinking in terms of just reward, of getting what they deserve, of fair recompense for effort put in.
- Jesus' point is that this is NOT the way God works!
 - [God is unfair!](#)
 - he is generous to those who do not deserve it!
- Tony Campolo, engaged, crossing a toll bridge in the States regularly:

- just for a laugh would pay for the person behind him - just to see the expression of confusion on some strangers face of a gift completely out of the blue!!

The Cross is Unfair, and brings Grace

- *Image: three sunset crosses*
- God and his grace is unfair because we don't deserve a just reward for our faithful service:
 - we deserve punishment, judgment for our filthy, dirty, sinful disobedience.
- None of us are actually really like the labourers out working in the fields from early in the day; none of us are really like the son who stayed at home and faithfully served his father:
 - we don't deserve anything except judgement from God

BUT

- God chooses not to treat us as we deserve!
- Like the farmer who hired the labourers, choosing to be generous, God chooses to treat us as his children, chooses to forgive us, chooses to give us life and not death!
 - *Image: three sunset crosses + "Not fair"*
 - that's what Jesus' death on the Cross is all about!
- Great transaction - Jesus didn't deserve to die - we didn't deserve to live - Jesus took on himself our burden, our guilt.
- That's why we are here - to celebrate God's amazing forgiveness!
 - *Image: three sunset crosses + "Full of grace"*
 - what did the labourers who started work at 12noon, at 3pm, at 5pm, say to their wives when they went home?
 - we are here to celebrate!