WEEKLY DEVOTION · CLOBBER PASSAGES, WEEK 6

Because No One Has Hired Us

Following Sunday's sermon, "If Anyone Will Not Work?"

SCRIPTURE · MATTHEW 20:1–16 AND EXODUS 16:16–18

> *At five o'clock, the landowner finds workers still standing in the marketplace and asks why. They answer, "Because no one has hired us." He sends them into the vineyard and pays them a full day's wage. And in the wilderness, when Israel gathered manna, those who gathered much had nothing left over, and those who gathered little had no shortage.*

REFLECTION

Picture the marketplace at five o'clock. The sun is low. Most of the workers were chosen hours ago. The ones still standing there have watched the landowners come and go all day, passing them by. Maybe they were older, or slower, or new in town. Every one of them knew what an empty day meant: an empty table that night.

"Why are you standing here idle all day?" the landowner asks. And their answer breaks the old verdict wide open: "Because no one has hired us." They weren't unwilling. They were waiting.

Paul's hard words in 2 Thessalonians were written to able people who had chosen to stop working and lean on others. They were never meant for the sick, the disabled, the grieving, the caregiver, or the person who has sent out forty applications and heard nothing back. Yet those are often the very people who hear that verse aimed at them.

Jesus tells a different story. In God's vineyard, the last are paid first, and everyone goes home with enough. It isn't a system of earning; it's an economy of grace, the same economy God practiced with manna in the wilderness.

Many of us carry a quiet belief that our worth is our work. It shows up when we lose a job, retire, get sick, or simply can't do what we used to. This week, let the landowner's generosity speak to that part of you: you are beloved not because of what you produce, but because you belong to God.

PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

"Go back to the marketplace." Notice one person who may be waiting to be chosen: a neighbor between jobs, a caregiver, someone living with a disability, or someone who is lonely. Offer one concrete thing, such as a meal, a ride, a job lead, or an hour of your time. And if you are the one waiting right now, let someone help you. Receiving is part of God's economy too.

PRAYER

Generous God,
you keep going back to the marketplace
for the ones no one else has chosen.
Free me from measuring my worth, or anyone's, by work alone.
Make me generous like you,
until everyone in your vineyard has enough.
Amen.