

First Last/Last First – Mark 10:31

Mark 10:31 [NIV] *“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

What did Christ mean by this short statement?

Jesus is explaining that in the world to come the values of this world will be reversed.

Those who seek status and importance in society today will receive none in God’s Kingdom.

Those who humble themselves by sacrificing their wealth and status to serve others, as the Holy Spirit directs them, will be well rewarded in the Kingdom of God.

Mark 10:28-30 [NIV] *“Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.”*

If our being faithful to what Christ commands loses us wealth, family and friends, we will now become part of a far larger family in the church and added to that eternal life in the future.

Matthew 20:1-16 [NIV] *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. “About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the market-place doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. “He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ “‘Because no-one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ “The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ “But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. **Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”***

Here again we have example of what would seem very unfair in society today.

The unions would be very angry.

Yet what the owner of the vineyard symbolically God, did was an act of love.

All these men were “day labourers” who depended on being hired every day if their families were going to be fed, clothed and sheltered.

This parable is not about rewards but about salvation.

It is a strong teaching about grace.

It is a further clarification of membership of the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast.”*

When someone gives you a gift do we say, *“that’s very nice, how much do I owe you?”*

No, the appropriate response is to say *“thank you”*.

Yet how often do we Christians even after we have been given the gift of salvation feel obligated to try to work our way to God?

How God wants us to respond is with gratitude, praise and joy.

Ephesians 2:10 [NIV] *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Our response would also be to allow the Holy Spirit to mould us into the very likeness [character] of our Creator God [Jesus Christ].

Isaiah 64:8 [NIV] *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”*

Again, such workmanship of God comes free, all we do is trust and yield to His Will, as clay does to a master potter.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

This is how we say thankyou to God and worship Him in a way that is acceptable to Him.

A total surrender to His Will.

We sacrifice our will and accept God’s Will for our lives.