



STUDY 23

Positioned for Blessing

Matthew 20:1-16, Genesis 12:1-4; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 45:16-17

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) is not just about the workers who are waiting to be hired but it is also about the landowner who is in a position to hire them. The workers can only wait for others to bring them blessing and opportunity, whereas the landowner is positioned to bring opportunity and to be a blessing to others.

The Parable ends with the provocative statement by Jesus that “the last shall be first.” This is made a reality for the workers in the parable because the landowner is in a position and has the power to make it so. This kind of positioning has always been in God’s plan for his people. In Deuteronomy 28:1-14 God not only promised to establish, bless, and prosper those who follow Him, but also that they will be positioned to lend to others – to be “the head, not the tail.” (Deut. 28:14) This echoes God’s promise to Abram of land and children (Genesis 12:1-4), which was not just a blessing for him alone – but was to be a blessing to others.

Blessing is never just about us: it is about others – including the future generations. We need to be building the Church for the generations who will follow us (Ps 45:16-17). That means, at times, that we need to be determined and faithful in our own walk, facing challenges with faith, trusting that as God’s people we can believe that He will bring us through Valleys of Weeping (Ps. 84:6) and we can determine ourselves to turn those valleys into in to pools of blessing as we go “from strength to strength.” (Ps. 84:6-7)

CONNECTION AND ACTION Use these questions to promote conversation and connection.

- Q:** Have you known a time when you felt the “shift” from being someone waiting to be blessed to somebody positioned to be a blessing? Describe that for us.
- Q:** What challenges do you face in terms of believing that God has positioned you to be a blessing? What makes it difficult for you to maintain a “blessing mentality” or to believe that He has called you to be “the head and not the tail”?
- Leaders’ Note:** ask people if, for instance, they identify with the Workers who protested that it was unfair that the Workers hired last received the same pay as them. i.e. do you slip in to jealousy or envy when they compare themselves to others?
- Q:** Why is it important to keep maintaining or cultivating a “blessing mentality”? Why is it important to maintain that kind of perspective about being God’s people?
- Q:** What ways have you found to maintain or cultivate a “blessing mentality”?

HIGHLIGHTS COMING UP

- Don't forget to drop your Stuff The Bus bag at the CityCare stand this weekend!
- As we approach the end of the year, we are focusing on NATION BUILDERS. Many of you would have set a FAITH GOAL at the start of the year while some groups choose a ONE-OFF OFFERING. This is a great time to inspire your group to meet your faith goal, or to receive a special Nation Builders offering. Please THANK your Connect Group for their Nation Builders giving and set a date (if you choose to receive a one-off offering).

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I LOVE MY CONNECT

BIBLE AND BELIEF Use these questions and scriptures to help believers develop a Biblical worldview.

Q: Sometimes it can seem like we will only ever be like “the workers” and never in the position of “the landowner.” What important Biblical principles do we need to hold fast to?

Read the following Scriptures for clues:-

2 Corinthians 9:6 – sowing & reaping

Proverbs 10:4 – diligence.

Galatians 6:9 – not giving up/ persevering. (See also **Genesis 12:5**)

See also the stories of Joshua, facing many battles and challenges, who was told to “be strong and courageous.” e.g. **Joshua 1:6-9**

Q: How is a “rich mentality” different to a “blessing mentality”? e.g. **Revelation 3:17** compared to **2 Corinthians 8:9**.

Leaders Note: a “rich mentality” believes it is self-made, whereas a “blessing mentality” is aware of and responds to God’s grace.

GROWING LEADERSHIP Use these questions to help people in your group grow as leaders.

“Generosity is a state of mind, not a state of money.”

Q: As leaders how can we cultivate a generous “state of mind” for ourselves as well as in others?

Leaders Note – help people stay focused on what they DO have, rather than on what they don’t have.

Q: What are you believing God to build or strengthen in your world or life in order that you might build the lives of others in 2013?

Q: How can we help others on our teams to stay committed to “the pilgrimage” and turn their “valleys” into “springs” (Ps 84:6)?

Leaders Note – consider how you can keep them focused on eternal purpose and thinking generationally.

PRAY TOGETHER

- New Connect Group Leaders
- Decisions for Jesus in our Christmas Services
- Doody St

PASTORAL CARE

- We have a pastoral care team at church to walk alongside people in your group who may be going through a tough time
- Please contact the church office Sydney 02 8853 5353 or Brisbane 07 3422 8500 to let us know of anybody in your group (with their permission) who have sickness, death of a loved one, marriage challenges, surgeries.

NATION BUILDERS – Causes we are supporting through Nation Builders:

1. **Church Planting** – Supporting a new generation of dynamic leaders to plant & build churches that will serve communities, influence cities and ultimately impact nations. Including: Amsterdam, Japan, Moscow, Paris, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Hillsong Germany.
2. **Gospel Missions** – Supporting missions locally & others that are furthering the Gospel all around the world. Including: Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), Hillsong TV and overseas workers in SE Asia.

Hillsong Church in Paris has been experiencing phenomenal growth recently. In a recent interview, Brendan White said that what might seem insignificant to you is actually having a great impact on the other side of the world. What we do locally impacts globally! The journey in Paris is really amazing with life after life being transformed. Connect groups across the city have grown, people are being water baptised and families in need are being cared for. Your contribution has helped all this to happen. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of many people and the nation of France. You can watch the interview on <https://secure.myhillsong.com/ConnectGroups/My/Studies.aspx>