

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, September 20, 2026
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

Someone once said, “Sometimes the greatest danger to goodness is not that we stop being good.” “It is that we begin believing our goodness gives us a claim over others – and even over God.”

That is the danger in today’s gospel. We heard the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. The workers who complain are not bad workers. They are not lazy. They arrived early. They worked through the heat. Their complaint even sounds reasonable: “We have borne the day’s burden and the heat.” They are good, hardworking people. But somewhere during that long day, their faithful work became a claim. We worked longer. Therefore, we deserve more.

The gospel commentaries on this gospel passage emphasize an important detail: the landowner has not cheated them. He pays exactly what they agreed upon. Their problem is not injustice. Their problem is entitlement. And this can become a very subtle temptation precisely for people who have tried to live faithfully. Perhaps we have faithfully attended Mass. We have remained devoted to our family. We have served the parish for many years. We have prayed, sacrificed, given, obeyed.

These are beautiful things. But goodness can quietly become dangerous when we begin saying: “After everything I have done, I deserve...” I deserve to be recognized and appreciated. I deserve an easier and more comfortable life. I

deserve to have my prayers answered. And when life does not follow our expectations, we can begin resenting God. “Lord, why me? I have been faithful.”

Today’s gospel asks us to examine that sentence carefully. Faithfulness becomes spiritually dangerous when gratitude turns into entitlement. This is why the context of the parable is so important. Immediately before it, Peter asks Jesus, “We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?” It is an understandable question. But Jesus recognizes the danger. Peter is beginning to keep accounts. We surrendered this much. What do we get in return?

So, Jesus tells him about the vineyard. The Kingdom is not a merit system in which we accumulate points until God becomes indebted to us. Everything begins with grace. Even the goodness for which we want God to reward us was first made possible by God. We can serve because He first called us. We can love because He first loved us.

My dear Friends, perhaps today we should examine not only our sins but also our goodness. We bring our sins to confession. Perhaps we should also bring the pride that can grow around our virtues. Lord, I have been faithful – but keep me humble. I have served – but keep me grateful. I have sacrificed – but never let my sacrifice become a claim against You.

Do you know the antidote to entitlement: more gratitude. The more we remember what we have received, the less tempted we are to demand what we think we deserve.

So instead of saying, “Lord, after everything I have done for You...” perhaps mature faith learns to say: “Lord, after everything You have done for me, how could I ever think You owe me anything?” Because faithful Christians do not stand before God presenting a bill. They stand before God holding out empty hands— and discover that they have always been filled by grace.