The parable we hear in today’s gospel is one of those that on first glance makes you kind of angry. And I have to admit, I struggled with this gospel for the last couple of weeks as I’ve been trying to prepare this homily, because it just doesn’t seem fair! How could God as the landowner pay the same amount to the person who only worked an hour as he does to the folks who worked all day in the scorching heat? It doesn’t seem fair! One of the beautiful things about the Catholic Church is that we have set readings for each day of the year, which means that we as preachers – or you as the people of God - can’t just ‘skip over’ passages that we don’t like. In a way, God forces us to wrestle with them, because it is in those most difficult passages that we often learn the most profound truths about God.

And I believe the Lord has led me to reflect on my own experience of being hired 1st– that seemingly privileged position that can lead to a looking down on those who were hired later in the day. And through my reflection, I think the Lord has helped me to understand *His* perspective.

Because I was reminded of being in the very position of the labourors who had been hired first, who became jealous that they were getting the same pay as the ones who worked for only a small part of the day. In one of my first jobs out of university, I was hired at the same time as several other people for the same job at the same salary. And after a week or two, the group – myself included – began to complain to each other and our boss because one of our fellow employees wasn’t pulling his weight. He came in late every day, he left early every day, and always took extended lunch breaks. We were justifiably upset because we were working harder than this guy, getting paid the same salary, and seemingly even worse, our manager knew about the situation but wouldn’t do anything about it!

But as time went on, we came to discover what our manager *already knew*, and why he was protecting this particular employee - that this man had 4 small children, a wife in the hospital undergoing treatment for a chronic health condition, and at the same time was battling with the immigration department so that he could avoid being sent back to a country where he and his family would almost certainly be persecuted.

It was amazing how quickly our jealousy and anger was diffused once we were able to see the whole situation in light of the information that our manager had.

And when we look to today’s 1st reading we gain some further insight into the mind of God who is the managing landowner in the parable through the words of the prophet Isaiah: “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*” God sees the whole picture – he knows all of the circumstance and reasons for every human action – what makes no sense to us, makes perfect sense to Him. What seems unjust through our human eyes, is perfectly just from a *Divine perspective*.

Because for those of us hired first, I think we forget about the stresses of those who were not hired early in the day. Their hope diminishes every hour they are not hired with worries about how they will care for their families, all the while those hired first enjoy the luxury of knowing they have a pay cheque coming at the end of the day.

We can take for granted how good it is to be laboring in the vineyard. Being hired early in the day, those of us *practicing our faith* enjoy the security of God’s field. We experience the *supernatural benefits* that go along with working in God’s vineyards during the scorching heat of the day which cannot be underestimated. When we participate in the sacraments, we literally are infused with the life of God. Each time we come to Mass and receive the Eucharist, we receive the actual Body and Blood of Christ into our souls; each time we go to confession, we not only receive God’s unconditional forgiveness, we are infused with God’s supernatural grace which re-ignites our souls and strengthens us in our battles against sin. If we could see the spiritual world and the *actual effects* that happen to us when we participate in the sacraments, we would all be in absolute awe of what is happening to us in those moments! Just because spiritual effects can’t be experienced by the senses doesn’t mean they are not profound encounters with Christ.

And also, we live in *constant hope!* By laboring throughout our lives trying to be the best Christians we can be, we live with *constant hope* that we have a God who loves us beyond all comprehension, and a God who blesses us abundantly now, and into eternity. If that same God is as generous to those who come into his vineyard later in life, what is that to us? Perhaps from this perspective the late hires actually deserve *even more!* Perhaps that is why Jesus says that ‘*…the last will be first, and the first will be last.*’

**God’s wisdom is perfect. Ours is imperfect.** When we appeal to fairness as a measure of justice, we risk falling into the sin of judgment. Yes, sometimes we do need to make judgment calls, but when it comes to the things of God, it is only God that can see the *whole* picture – it is only he who is equipped to judge fairly. I think we can save ourselves a lot of anger and resentment towards others if we can bring ourselves to accept this fact. When we come to believe that God knows what he is doing, and trust in his ways, we will have a lot more peace in our lives. We can take solace in knowing that one day *all things will be revealed*, and we will also come to see things as God does.