



Counterintuitive Kingdom: The First Will Be Last

Sam McDermid – 17th May 2026 ([watch talk here](#))

This week, Sam focussed on the Kingdom principle ‘the first will be last, and the last will be first’. Sam explained how Jesus’ teaching flipped the prevailing social hierarchy of the time, elevating those with the lowest status and challenging the privilege of those at the top (e.g., Matthew 18:3-4, 19:24). We heard how Jesus uses The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, in which the landowner represents God and the workers represent us, to explain the logic of the Kingdom and this principle.

From this parable, Sam draws out three things we can learn about God’s Kingdom. Firstly, it is not about what we can earn. Access to the Kingdom of God—and all the good things that come with it—cannot be earned, it is available to all and offered out equally, independent of status, skill or achievement. Secondly, it is about God’s generosity. It is only through him that any one of us have access to the Kingdom and God is generous with his grace. Finally, we’re called to put the last first.

Reflect and discuss

Read the key passage from this talk, **Matthew 19:30-20:16**. What stands out to you from this passage and Sunday’s talk?

Share & Pray

Consider Sam’s question: **what does ‘the first will be last, and the last will be first’ really mean for us?**

Reflect on what is happening in your own heart? **Are we striving to earn God’s love**, perhaps because the world has taught us to work hard to earn rewards or because we are trying to make up for something we have done wrong?

Spend time in smaller groups sharing your responses and praying for one another.

Activate

This parable isn’t just an invitation for us to adjust the way with think about our own access to God’s grace, it is also an invitation to adjust how we see and treat others. Sam encouraged us to see others in the light of God’s grace which is distributed generously.

Ask yourself: **who might I be putting at the back of the queue for God’s grace?** Perhaps someone at work, college or school or a group we see represented in the media.

What can you do to reach out to them and extend the generous grace of God?
Could you chat to them or practically do something tangible and kind for them?

Prepare to share your reflections and experience in a future Small Group meeting.