

“That’s not fair!” a child I know said to his father.

The father- a brilliant man- then said this to his son: “Would you like it to be even less fair? Keep complaining.”

From childhood, we seem to have a quantity-oriented view of what’s fair.
If you get more than me, it’s not fair.
Arguably, we are much less likely to notice this when it is in our favor.

However, it still poses a problem.

How do we teach our children the power of fairness?
Are we modeling it?
Do we believe it ourselves?
Am I a model of fairness?
Hmmm.
It’s a humbling question.

Today’s Gospel asks us “Are you envious because I am generous?”

That is one of the most challenging lines in the gospels.

“Are you envious because I am generous?”

Are you envious of the blessings of others?

I have a hard answer.

It is none of your business.
It’s between them and the Lord.

It doesn’t match with what you think they should get?
You’re stepping in to God’s business.

One of the things I spend time with is the comparison between others and themselves.

Except that there is no comparison.

You and the Lord.

That’s the deal.

It’s not about raising me up to the standards of others,
It’s not about putting me on the standards of those I know.

It’s about honesty- humility- which is honest- between yourself and the Creator.

Who are you?
Who does God Want you to be?
Does God compare us to each other?
Does a parent compare their children to each other?
Not if they're a terrific parent.

The great thing is that it doesn't need to be the same for all of us.
In fact, I think it denies God's creativity to believe that we should all be treated in the exact same way all the time. We're all in different places, respond to different things.

Are you being authentic?
Are you being the loving being that loves first and asks questions later?
Or are you being the person who withholds love until the recipient is worthy?
Well, beloved, that's not your job.

Our job is to love regardless.
Regardless.
No withholding.
No using for public demonstration.
No using because it makes me look good.

Love regardless.

Love regardless.
Can You?

It's what we're called to.
And I believe you can.

Will you?

That's an entirely different question.

Why do you come to church?
Let's put this question in light of today's parable.

Do you come here so that God will bless you?
Or do you come here so that God will bless us?
All humans beings.

Let's take the eucharist for example.
Do you come to the communion rail to accept the Eucharist as a reward for good behavior, or do you come to the Eucharist in line with all of the other human beings in this building who are trying to be faithful disciples? I hope it's the latter. No one deserves the Eucharist. It is a gift of God. Generously- and painfully- given.

It is not a reward for good behavior.

The Eucharist is nourishment for our journey- a healing, strengthening food for authentic Christian striving to be the best that we can be.

And as humans we all fall short. ALL of us. It's up to us to lift our hand to a fallen brother or sister and help them up. It's up to us to rejoice with another because God has blessed them.

It is not our job to judge. That's none of our business.

That's God's business.

Ours is to not be envious because our God is generous.

Ours is to love the generosity God, even when we may not yet understand it.

Amen.