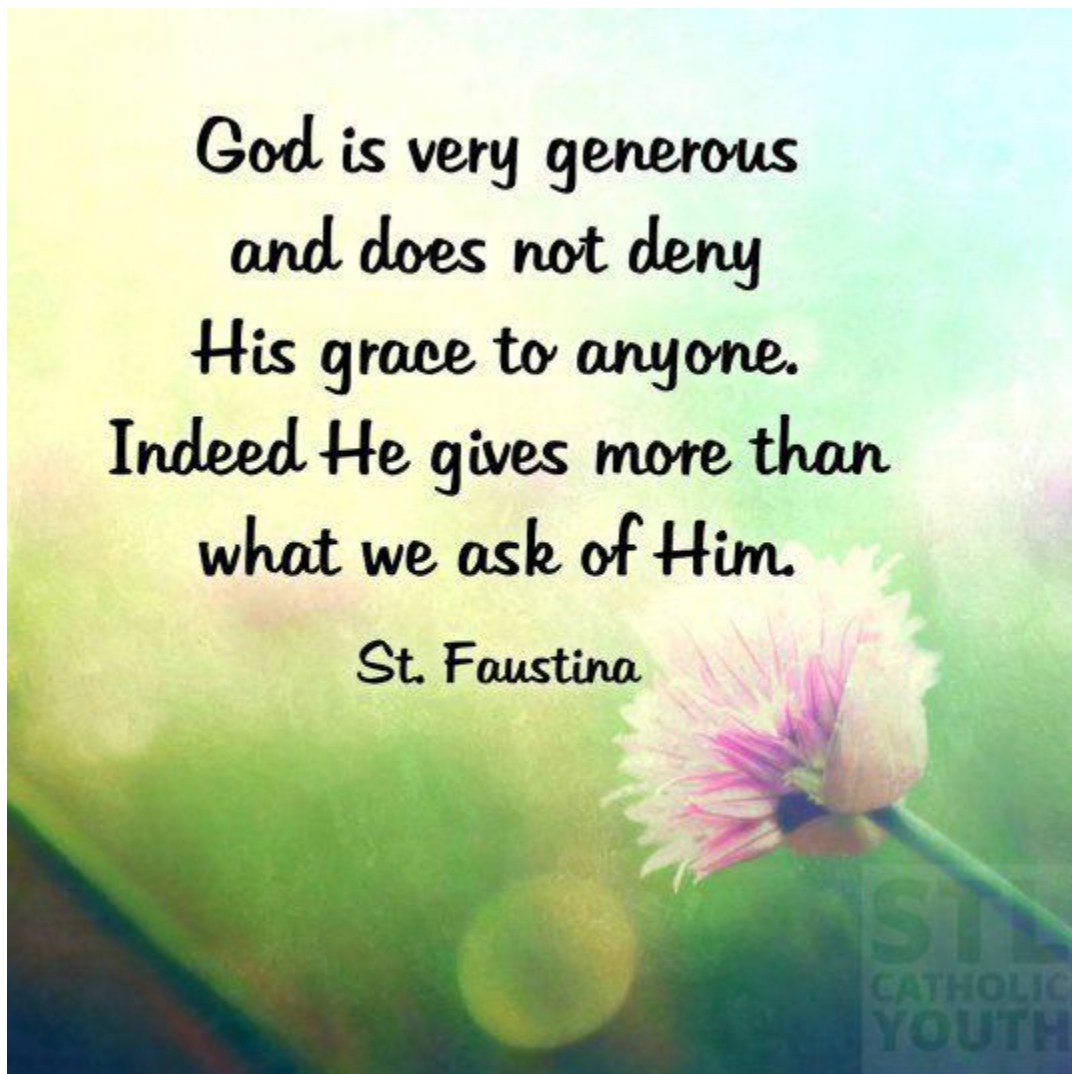


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** *“O LORD, in your strength the king is glad; in your victory how greatly he rejoices! You have granted him his heart’s desire; you refused not the wish of his lips. For you welcomed him with goodly blessings, you placed on his head a crown of pure gold. He asked life of you: you gave him length of days forever and ever. Great is his glory in your victory; majesty and splendor you conferred upon him. You made him a blessing forever, you gladdened him with the joy of your face.” ~ Psalm 21*

***Lord, in your strength the king is glad!!!***



The following is the link to the readings for today, Wednesday of the 20th Week in Ordinary Time.

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/081821.cfm>

There's an old story about a landowner who, at times, hired day laborers to augment his normal workers because there were times of the year when he needed extra laborers to get the harvest in. He would pay each laborer by the weight of what they harvested. This meant that a man could make as much in two hours of work as another man made in eight hours of work as long as he harvested as much as the other man. It meant that the more work someone got done, the more money they would be paid. This is a merit based system of paying people for their work.

As you may know, I worked for twelve years in the software industry after college and before I went to the seminary to study for the priesthood. I was a regional salesman and sales manager the last five years of my business career. I was given a small salary but I could earn more on the commission of my sales and the sales people who worked for me. In fact, my salary was less than forty percent of what it was when I was a software engineer but the commissions from my sales gave me the chance to make about fifty percent more than I could ever have made as a software engineer.

Sales commissions were a powerful instrument that could help someone make a very good living. The thing to remember about them is that they are part of a merit based pay system. The more you sell, the higher your value is to your company. When your pay is directly tied to how your company measures your value, you can continue to earn a higher and higher income as long as you continue to increase your value to the company. This is at the heart of a merit based pay system.

Our Lord Jesus' parable about the landowner and his pay is a story about grace! It's not a story about merit. In fact, it's the opposite of a story about merit. Of course, the workers who worked all day in the hot sun merited higher pay than the workers who only worked an hour. Unfortunately, those workers became envious of the others who only worked for an hour and their envy blinded them to the generosity of the landowner.



*“God is more anxious  
to bestow his blessings on us  
than we are to receive them.”*

Saint Augustine

This parable begs a question. Is God governed by our expectations? Of course not! But, sometimes we act like the workers who worked all day in the hot sun and think that God is governed by our expectations.

St. John wrote that *“God is love”*. (1 John 4:8) God is governed by His own eternal nature which is love. God is governed by love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, generosity and kindness. Always remember that God’s justice is God’s mercy. The two go hand in hand.

Sometimes we let our fallen human nature get in our way. We become prideful and envious just as the workers who worked all day in the hot sun were. We begin



to think in terms of “why did God give someone else something better than he gave me?” or “I deserve what God gave so-and-so more than he or she does?”

When we let our fallen human nature get in our way, a terrible thing happens. We fail to notice the very gifts that God has given to us because we are so focused on what God has given to others. This alienates us from both God and our brothers and sisters in Christ.

God gives us what He wants us to receive. My dad gave me an allowance when I was a child. I did not get to tell my dad what my allowance should be. My dad gave me what he wanted me to have based on what he thought was best for me. God is always generous with us. God always treats us with love, mercy and compassion, forgives us our sins and answers our prayers. But, His answer is based on His internal nature and on what He sees as best for us.

God gives us what He wants us to receive. Our job, as disciples, is to put aside pride and envy. Our job, as disciples, is to be grateful for all the good gifts He has given us.

May God Bless you and all those who love the lord.

