

Eleventh Hour Christians

Have you ever waited to the last minute to do something? Are you ever late for an appointment? Are you always the last to sign-up or take advantage of a good offer? For some of us, getting there first is the last thing on our mind and therefore we seem to always be bringing up the rear. I recall a few years back I was attending some mandatory training at work. There was a sign-up sheet so that those responsible for the training would know that you had attended. About midway through the day, just before lunch, a lady came into the class. She looked for the sign-in sheet, signed it, and then sat down. In less than thirty minutes it was lunch time and we were dismissed for an hour. After lunch we returned to the class but I noticed that the “late lady” didn’t return. I must say that it aggravated me just a little. Here’s someone who is two hours late, then doesn’t return for the remainder of the class. However her name is on that sign-up sheet and she probably got credit for the class, in the meantime I had to sit there all day!

Now, as I look back on it, I realize that my frustration over the situation is exactly what those in the vineyard felt in Jesus’ story told in *Matthew 20*. It’s the story of the “*Laborers in the Vineyard*” and many of the workers felt cheated and treated unfairly when some fellow workers who showed up late (some very late) received the same pay as those who had worked all day. Today, in God’s Kingdom, some workers show up very late in life, some call them the “Eleventh Hour” Christians. Many of us may complain (like those in the story Jesus told) that we have been faithful all our lives and then here comes a person who has lived as they pleased and now at the last moment decide that they better get right with God. They haven’t worked and studied for years like we have, yet God is going to save them just like He saved us? It doesn’t seem fair. Notice the words of Jesus, “*So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.*” (*Matthew 20:16*). God has chosen the last, the lowly, the small, the humble, and the weak to be the greatest in the church (*1 Corinthians 12:23*). Those of us who are active in the church should stop and realize that there is more to serving God than blowing a big trumpet so that everyone can see and hear (*Matthew 6:1-18*). The eleventh-hour Christian plays a vital role in the church, their years of worldly experience can help bring others come to Christ (“*I have become all things to all men that I might save some*” *1 Corinthians 9:22*). Their vigor and anxiousness to “catch-up” make them great Bible students. They quietly go about their work in the church sometimes without notice. According to His word, these are the ones God finds most favorable in His family. When we go to share the Good News of Jesus, let’s not neglect those who are older, those who seem to be hopeless and at the end of life. God wants all men everywhere to be obedient to Him and receive the gift of eternal life.

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