

PARABLE OF THE CHEFS

by THOMAS A. TIFT

GENRE: Reader's theatre

SYNOPSIS: A modern take on Matthew 20:1-16 (the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard) .

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 4

TOPIC: Church Life, Grace

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Matthew 20:1-16

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

CHARACTERS:

VOICES 1 & 2—Narrators

VOICE 3—A restaurateur

VOICE 4—Various characters

PROPS: None

COSTUMES: All black

SOUND: Four cordless or standing mikes

LIGHTING: Spotlight

SETTING: Empty Stage

Drama Ministry

service@DramaMinistry.com

www.DramaMinistry.com

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Four readers stand or sit on stools.

VOICE 1: The kingdom of heaven is like a successful restaurateur who went out early one morning to hire chefs for his fashionable boulevard bistro.

VOICE 2: He agreed with several chefs on the usual daily salary, and they busied themselves in the kitchen, preparing the cuisine du jour.

VOICE 1: At about 9 A.M., the restaurateur noticed several people standing around on the sidewalk outside Starbucks.

VOICE 3: "Get into my kitchen,"

VOICE 1: he said.

VOICE 3: "Help prepare my fabulous meals, and I will pay you whatever is right."

VOICE 1: So they went to join the original chefs.

VOICE 2: Now, the restaurateur looked out again at noon and at 3 o'clock, and the same thing happened.

VOICE 1: And the kitchen workforce continued to expand.

VOICE 2: Around 5 P.M., he took a spin in his BMW, and noticed even more folks standing around at the beach doing nothing.

VOICE 3: "Why are you standing here idle all day?"

VOICE 1: he said.

VOICE 4: "Nobody's hired us,"

VOICE 1: they replied.

VOICE 3: "Get into the kitchen!"

VOICE 1: And so they did.

VOICE 2: At closing time, in the wee hours of the morning, the restaurateur said to his maitre d',

VOICE 3: "Call in the chefs and pay them, beginning with the last and going to the first."

VOICE 2: When those hired off the beach at 5 P.M. came, each of them received the full daily pay.