When we look carefully at this parable, we find the king punishing those who slighted his invitation. However not all slighted or rejected his invitation in the same way.

First there were those who ignored the invitation. Second there were those who answered it with violence. Third there was one who accepted it disrespectfully. This man had not ignored the invitation, nor had he responded with violence. He had accepted the invitation and come to the feast. Yet he was cast out and punished just as severely as those who had rejected the invitation. Why?

The king noticed that the man was not dressed for the occasion. When asked why, the man had no answer. The king was insulted and made angry by this man's disrespect for the king's son, in whose honour the guests had assembled. This shows us that whilst God's invitation is extended to everyone and anyone, no one can accept it on their own terms. The invitation is conditional, and if you don't take care to meet the conditions, then you are treated as one who has rejected God's invitation.

Jesus finished the parable with the comment, "Many are called but few are chosen" (verse 14). The invitation of God goes far and wide, but only those who accept it on God's terms will be privileged to enter heaven. (A similar parable is found among the three Banquet Parables of Luke 14:7-24)

Matthew 20:1-16

Verses 1-7 tell of the owner of a vineyard who goes out early in the morning to hire laborers. He also went out at mid morning, and again at noon. He even went out at 5pm, an hour before the workday was to end. Each time he hired laborers.

This shows one aspect of God's kindness. He is always willing to accept people into his kingdom, whatever age they might be. He does not reject those whom he finds still outside of his kingdom late in life.

Verses 8-10 show a second aspect of God's kindness. He rewards everyone equally and fully, even those who have not been profitable servants to him. Those who worked only one hour did not earn the denarius (standard wage for a long day's work), yet the landowner gave it to them, and moreover paid them first.