Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

FAIRNESS

Presented in Inverted Parallel Literary Form[1]

1	"For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. [2] He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work.	Agreement Made
2	[3] "At nine o'clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. [4] So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. [5] So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o'clock he did the same thing.	I Give Justice/ Fairly
3	[6] "At five o'clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, 'Why haven't you been working today?' [7] "They replied, 'Because no one hired us.' "The landowner told them, 'Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.'	Eleventh Hour
4 4'	[8] "That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first.	The Wages Paid
3'	[9] When those hired at five o'clock were paid, each received a full day's wage.	Eleventh Hour
2'	[10] When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day's wage. [11] When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, [12] 'Those people worked only one hour, and yet you've paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.'	Where is Justice?

[1] Notes:

1. The stanza numbering (column 1), indentation (column 2), and thematic commentary (column 3) are used by Kenneth Bailey to distinguish between scenes in the narrative and parable.
2. The literary forms were imposed on the text by either Jesus, or the author writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
3. These inspired literary forms were intended by the source/author to draw our attention to the key teachings of the narrative and parable.

1’	[13] “He answered one of <u>them</u>, (A) ‘Friend, I haven’t been <u>unfair</u>! (B) Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? [14] Take your <u>money</u> and go. (C) I <u>wanted</u> to pay this last worker the same as you. (D) [15] Is it against the law for me to do what I <u>want</u> (D’) with my <u>money</u>? (C’) Should you be <u>jealous</u> because I am kind to others?’ (B’) [16] “So those who are last now will be first then, and <u>those</u> who are first will be last.” (A’)	Agreement Kept

Parable Worksheet

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Matthew 20:1-16

FAIRNESS

Main Characters:

Main Events/Scenes:

Turning Point:

Historical-Cultural Gaps (THEN ↔ NOW):

Earthly & Heavenly Parallels:

Earthly Principle & Heavenly Principle: