

## PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM - PART VIII The Parable of the Drag Net

Text: Matthew 13:47-50

**Key Word:** Net

**Key Thought:** Now Is the Time to Draw Others to Christ

\*\*\* The East coast fishermen were given another severe blow to their morale in the mid 90's. The cod fish stocks were still in a very depleted condition.

The government had to issue a law prohibiting the fishermen from even catching cod for their personal consumption. It drove the final nail in another of their limping canneries.

Their whole livelihood was at stake. The unfortunate thing was that they were not entirely to blame for the depleting fish stocks.

Foreign fishing vessels had entered beyond the 200-mile limit and in their greed had wiped out the possibility of a thriving fishing industry in the near future. These vessels came fully equipped with entire canning factories on board to completely process the fish before they returned home. \*\*\*

When it comes to fishing, it is one sport that I enjoy doing. My only regret is that the urgent always gets in the way of the important and I seem to do little fishing anymore.

**Our Parable Today Is Not So Concerned about the Amount of Fish but Rather about the Type of Fish.**

This is the last in our series of **The Parables of Kingdom of Heaven**. Many writers believe that these parables (when put together) have to do with the age beginning with the disciples and continuing until the end of the age.

1. **The Sower** - Jesus/disciples (32-96 AD.)
2. **The Weeds** - Early Church Fathers (100-300's)
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6. **The Pearl** - The Missionary Movement (1700-1800's)
7. **The Drag Net** - Leading to the Second Coming (1900 -2000's)

This parable like the ones just preceding it was spoken to men of faith in a private setting. **Nonbelievers still make a mockery about the need for salvation and an ultimate judgment for those who reject God.**

**The meaning in this parable is very important to our generation.** In fact, it deals specifically with our generation. Most scholars are seeing that we are living in the time known as *"the end of the age."*

**What Was Jesus Trying to Tell His Disciples Through the Symbols of this Parable?**

**I. THE NET**

**II. THE SEA**

**III. THE FISHERMEN**

**IV. THE FISH**

**V. THE ANGELS**

### **I. THE NET**

Jesus spoke this parable appropriately near the Sea of Galilee. The net that He used in this parable was known as a *"drag-net."* **It was only used by commercial fishermen. It was a large hauling net of great length and weighted at the bottom. It would be swept along the bottom of the sea to gather the schools of fish.**

**This net represents the action that takes place when we proclaim and present the gospel of God's redeeming grace to the ends of the far ends of the earth.** Through our missionary efforts many are drawn into the sweeping effect as they are encompassed about with the gospel message.

Just as in any commercial fishing industry there is much competition. Like the foreign fishing vessels which have combed our coastal waters, so have we an enemy who has tried to gather the souls of mankind unto himself.

*"Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them."*

*Ecclesiastes 9:12*

The gospel has been gaining great inroads into the nations of the world lately. It is a time of unequalled missionary endeavour. The Church is becoming involved as never before.

## I. THE NET (Contd.)

"Its means of grace, are the outspread and comprehensive net . . . none are so deep that it does not descend to them, none are so high that it does not reach them, none so bad that they are cast out, none so good that they are passed by; it collects good and bad."

John Cumming  
"Lectures on the Parables"  
1852

### Largest Religious Groups

Christianity (31.5%)  
Islam (23.2%)  
Hinduism (15.0%)  
Buddhism (7.1%)  
Folk religions (5.9%)

“According to a 2011 Pew Research Center survey, **there were 2.19 billion Christians around the world in 2010**, more than three times as many as the 600 million recorded in 1910. However, this rate of growth is slower than the overall population growth over the same time period. **According to a 2015 Pew Research Center study, by 2050, the Christian population is expected to be 3.0 billion.**

The average Christian fertility rate is 2.7 children per woman, which is higher than the global average fertility rate of 2.5. Globally, Christians were only slightly older (median age of 30) than the global average median age of 28 in 2010. According to Pew Research religious switching is projected to have a modest impact on changes in the Christian population.

According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, approximately 2.7 million convert to Christianity annually from another religion; World Christian Encyclopedia also stated that Christianity ranks in first place in net gains through religious conversion. While, according to "The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion", approximately 15.5 million convert to Christianity annually from another religion, approximately 11.7 million leave Christianity annually, and most of them become irreligious, resulting in a net gain of 3.8 million.

Christianity adds about 65.1 million people annually due to factors such as birth rate, religious conversion and migration, while losing 27.4 million people annually due to factors such as death rate, religious apostasy and immigration. Most of the net growth in the numbers of Christians is in Africa, Latin America and Asia.”

## I. THE NET (Contd.)

“For the first time in history we can anticipate the completion of the missionary task, which is to establish an indigenous church planting movement within the language and social structure of every people group on earth.”

Ralph Winter Bruce Koch  
*“Finishing the Task”*

The message that was given to the apostle Peter is being portrayed before our very eyes.

*"I now realize how true it is that God does not show  
favouritism (no respecter of persons)  
35. but accepts men from every nation who fear him  
and do what is right."*

*Acts 10:34,35*

## II. THE SEA

**The sea represents the whole mass of fallen humanity. The sea is a body of water that is always in motion. It is restless.** Storms cause it to dislodge its mire and dirt. During unsettled times the water becomes very murky.

We only have to listen to our daily news reports to get the message that our world is in a chaotic condition. The nations of the world are restless. The storms of life are dislodging a lot of unsightly things that wash up on the shores of our life. It is the grace of God that extends itself into this horrible pit to redeem those who were created into the image of God.

Fishing vessels choose two times of the day to do most of their fishing. It is either in the evening or in the early morning. There is time period where we need to leave the net alone before dragging it along the sea bed.

God has directed His Church to spread out over the nations of this world with His message, ministry, and methods. It is being displayed for the nations to see. Wherever **the Net** is spread and wherever people come under its influence, **the Net** is seen in **the Sea**.

### III. THE FISHERMEN

Several of Christ's disciples could relate to this parable due to the fact that they were commercial fishermen before following the Lord. The prophet Ezekiel foretold that it would happen,

*"Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to en Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds - like the fish of the Great Sea."*

*Ezekiel 47:10*

Jesus said after causing the disciples to catch boat-fulls of fish,

*"Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."*

*Luke 5:10*

In most of the other parables Jesus was the key figure. In this parable, He shows how He wishes to work through us to accomplish His will. **Even though it is true that only Jesus alone can save souls, He chooses to not save them alone. He uses the saved to reach out and lead others to salvation in Christ Jesus.**

This is the first time in these parables that the word **"they"** is used. Jesus gives us the privilege of serving WITH Him. Was it not the servants at the wedding feast in Cana that both filled the water pots and drew from them? Was it not the disciples who distributed the bread and fishes to the multitude? He was consecrating these men to become fishers of men.

This parable does not mention any of the names of those involved. **No parable mentions any names.** We must be kept hidden by the shadow of the cross of Christ. Paul kept things in the right perspective when he wrote,

*"For when one says, 'I follow Paul' and another says, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not mere men"  
7. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God makes things grow."*

*I Corinthians 3:3,7*

**One thing that also becomes clear is that the "catch" will include many different types of "fish."** This does not bear any poor reflection on the way the men were fishing.

### III. THE FISHERMEN (Contd.)

The scriptures say that once they reached the shore they "*separated*" the good fish from the bad. They "*sat down*" to do this which meant they took the proper time and care that was necessary.

Just as the disciples collected 12 baskets full of leftovers after Jesus' miracle so now the fishermen put the good fish into baskets. **Our duty is not to pass on judgement about what is good and bad.** Our work is simply to collect the fish. Judgement will come in its rightful time.

### IV. THE FISH

The fish that were initially caught included both good and bad. No fisherman could tell what was in the net until it was fully drawn in and the fish were sorted.

\*\*\* In the early 1990's we began making trips up to the oldest community in Alberta, called Fort Chipewyan. We were invited by a native man and his wife who were trappers and fishermen.

I went up once when the fishing season was on. These people worked long hours to haul in the Walleye. The run only lasted for a few weeks. Nothing was left to chance. Their boats and equipment were carefully checked over. Arrangements were made for pilots and planes to ship out the fish on ice. The market system was established.

They were not fond of allowing any rookies to get in their way. Time was of the essence. \*\*\*

I wonder what would happen in Canada if the Church took on this type of mentality when it came to soul-winning? I believe that the Holy Spirit is ready to place this kind of urgency upon His present day "fishermen."

**Have you ever wondered where the bad fish come from?** It is like the parable of the wheat and the tares. **We will never have a perfect Church until Jesus comes with His angels to do the final separation and subsequent judgement.**

**There will always be a Ham in the Ark; a Judas among the Apostles; and an Esau and Jacob struggling in the womb of the Church of Christ.**

People can be religious but not regenerated;  
Baptized in water but not in the Blood  
Professors but not possessors.

## V. THE ANGELS

The final part of God's separation will not include you and me. It is left for the angels of heaven. The only part of the separation that we are involved in is for the purpose of collecting the good fish and then placing the bad fish to the side. When angels become involved, it will be to collect the bad fish. Jesus will then be left to take the good fish.

If we really had an understanding of what is about to happen, the Church would become much more urgent about warning the wicked to flee from the wrath to come. God will not allow mistakes to be made. The time of separation is at hand. We are called to do our part while it is still day.

The parables are full of examples of separation

1. The Separation of the Wheat and the Tares
2. The Separation of the Good and Bad Fish
3. The Separation of the Wedding Guests (without wedding garments)
4. The Separation of Good and Evil Servants
5. The Separation of the Wise and Foolish Virgins
6. The Separation of the Profitable and Unprofitable Servants
7. The Separation of the Sheep and the Goats

**Presently** angels are sent as ministers to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). That day is soon ending. They will then begin the unfortunate task of dividing the bad from the good. Lets not have a Sadducean approach about angels.

\*\*\* A number of years ago an art exhibit was held in London, England where a painting titled "*He was Despised and Rejected*" was being displayed.

The crowd that was surging around our Lord were the typical crowds. In the background was an angel who was watching every movement. Just as angels were active at the time of the crucifixion, so will they be at the time of our Lord's return. Both are times of rejecting God. During these times angels will be called forth. \*\*\*

## V. THE ANGELS (Contd.)

**The angel's discrimination speaks of heaven's standards.** Think of what would happen today if God's angels began to deal with everything and everyone who were causing humanity to stumble! What if they cast out the workers of iniquity who had influenced this world with their evil practises? **We still have time to spread the net!**

Let us spread the net as far as we can. Only God knows who can be reached. If our vision is for Cornwall then our vision is too small. That is why we've already been involved supporting missionary work in India, Myanmar, Germany, the Carribean Islands, Russia, Africa, and South America.

**We not only want to get the net wide, we also want to let it get deep.** Not all works are as profitable as others. God knows where we should be involved. May He continually lead us.

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C:\My Documents\WPWin(11.0)\Sermons.94\Parables\Mat13\_47.50.wpd

Date: June 2,9/19

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Date: Dec 2/07

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Date: Feb 6/94

Place: FCA

Time: 6:30 Pm

Song: Reign in Me - G



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