

Parable of the Drawing in of the Net

Matthew 13:47-52

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: ⁴⁸ Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

⁴⁹ So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

⁵² Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

So remembering a parable is a natural story or event which helps us to understand the Kingdom and spiritual applications, let's examine **what is happening in the natural**. Let's do some quick research of ancient fishing techniques. Net fishing or dragnet involved the following (the technique is still used today):

- Requires a very large net
- The net is weighted so it can reach the bottom of the water and then is dragged to shore
- This catches every fish in the net as it is dragged to shore
- In some cases, they start from shore and the net is taken out by a boat(s)
 - Men on the shore then drag the net back in toward the shore

Now let's look at the intent of drag fishing. The net is large so the intent is to catch all or as many fish as possible. There is no discrimination as the fish are not separated until the net is brought back to shore. There is a process and plan involved. The intent is to separate the fish and keep the ones you want and discard or reject the other undesirable fish.

Observation: This type of fishing differs from the kind of fishing I did when I was growing up. We didn't use a large net, instead we used rod and reel. We selected the bait based upon the kind of fish we wanted to catch. When we caught some, we placed the "keepers" in our nets and we threw back the fish we didn't want. I felt sorry for the rejected fish if they were caught by my Dad, as he would smack them along the side of the boat to discourage them from hitting his bait anymore. So while we were selective in our fishing, drag net fishing brings everything in.....for the moment.

Now that we have looked at this in the natural, let's see how Jesus explains the spiritual application.

⁴⁹ So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

So according to the interpretation of this parable, there is currently a process and plan at work. There is a large net that has been cast out into the world. The intent is to drag everyone into this net and bring it back to shore or the starting point. When the net reaches the shore, there will be a judgment and separation process where just as in drag net fishing, the desirable fish/people are kept, and the undesirable are cast away.

So lets see what the items and roles represent.

- The Net – Matthew Henry states the casting of the net represents the Gospel. I concur with this since Jesus refers to this idea in Matthew 24:14:
 - **“And **this** gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”**
- The fish are all the people of the world.
 - Good people are keepers; bad people are cast away.
- People pulling the nets to shore – Matthew Henry states these are ministers of the Gospel serving as fishermen. Personally, I like this idea but it may be expanded to include everyone working for the Lord and the Kingdom by spreading the Gospel even if they don’t have the official title of minister.
 - See Matthew 4:19 where Jesus states I will make you fishers of men.
- The Angels – serve as the ones who separate and clean the catch. Note, just as in the parable of the wheat and tares, the job of separating the good from the bad is not our job.....it is a task given to the Angels.

The application:

- Judgment is coming. All of us will go through it.
- When the nets are full, judgment will be around the corner; the net today is continuing to fill up the Gospel net is being spread across the world.
- There is no discrimination, the Gospel will be preached to all regardless so there will be diversity in the net and in the kingdom. Both Jews and Gentiles are in the net. Good folks and bad.
- The rejected folks will face judgment and will not be saved.
- While the net continues to draw closer to shore, Christians should be ensuring they are not counted as one of the wicked. Additionally, they should support the spread of the net across the world.
- We should not pick and choose who we share the Gospel with. Additionally, we should not be separating the fish out before the net gets to shore.

This parable is similar to the Parable of the Wheat and Tares in that they both outline the judgment that is to come and the fate of true believers and the wicked.

Other commentary observations:

- The world will remain divided to the end, the church will not reform the world
- Believers and non-believers will be caught in the net
- Drag net is a tool for catching fish, like the Gospel is a tool for catching men's souls; fishermen are those who use the tool to catch fish/men (McCray)
- False doctrine can draw souls into the net who will later be rejected (McCray)
- Psalm 78 and the mixed multitude are a prime example and foreshadowing of the plan (Latham, McCray)
 - Exodus 12:38
 - 1 Corinthians 10
- Some fish that typically would have been rejected (unbelievers) can be converted before the net reaches shore. Some fish that would have been accepted, can be defiled before the net reaches shore. I noticed when I went fishing with my dad, some fish we used to reject, we started to keep because other friends we knew saw value in them.

⁵¹ Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

Jesus asks the disciples if they understood. So, it must have been important for them and for us to have a clear understanding. Instead of entertaining people, we should ensure they have an understanding.

We should be asking the same question of our students.

Parable of the Householder

⁵² Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Jesus explains the role of teachers (scribes) through this parable. Every teacher who is a teacher in the Kingdom is like the homeowner who maintains both old and new treasures and presents them (I assume for others including visitors to see).

David Guzik states old and new represents what you knew before and what you just learned.

Another commentary compared it to the old and new testaments.

I like the perspective of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown:

- A Christian teacher who is taught in the mysteries of the Gospel which they must teach to others.
- Is similar to a homeowner who deals out his store of divine truth.
- This treasure or store includes old truths in ever new forms, aspects, applications, and with ever new illustrations.



I particularly like the perspective from JFB. Especially since my own teaching has seen a number of transitions from my original understanding and approach, to the teaching approach I use now that focuses on greater understanding and application, real life examples and case studies which changes as new life experiences and examples occur, giving greater insight and proper application of the Word. I eagerly await new approaches and insights from the Spirit to occur during the remainder of my teaching.

Application: as new aspects and understanding is gained; this treasure of knowledge can be combined with prior truths and experience and be a treasure for others to be saved.

John 17:17 – Thy word is truth.