

The Parable of the Net

Matthew 13: 47-50

As Jesus continues to share parables with the disciples, He offers a parable that some of them would have been able to relate to. This parable deals with casting a net while fishing. Peter, Andrew, James, and John had been professional fishermen prior to following Jesus. The principles remain the same, but the spiritual aspect has greater consequences.

This parable is not difficult to understand, but we too need to grasp the urgency of our day and the eternal implications associated with our work for the Lord. Being obedient to the Lord, while fishing for men, is not just a hobby or leisurely exercise. As we will discover, the eternal destiny of peoples' lives hang in the balance. We must do all we can to be effective in our efforts to reach the lost and perishing while there is still time for them to respond to the Gospel.

As we examine the text, I want to consider the [aspects](#) of this parable as it relates to humanity and our modern day. Let's take a few moments to look at: [The Parable of the Net](#).

I. The Picture in the Net (47) – *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.* Consider the picture our Lord illustrates. We see:

A. The Comparison – He compares the kingdom of heaven to a fishing net. The word net is derived from the Greek word *sagenei*, from which we get our word "seine." Most of us are likely familiar with a fishing net or seine. They are finely woven together in order to snare the fish as they swim into the net. It is often dragged through the water to catch fish as they swim. This type of net was large and required a team of men to cast and retrieve it properly.

B. The Casting – *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea.* Jesus speaks of a fundamental principle that any fisherman would have known. In order to have any hope of catching fish, the net had to be cast into the sea. The net is designed to catch fish efficiently, but apart from being in the water, there would be no harvest of fish.

- This simple principle also applies to fishing for men. We will never reach those who are apart from Christ if we are not casting the Gospel message. We have it in our boat; we are familiar with it, and sure of its ability to secure a harvest, but until we actually cast the net, we cannot expect to reach the unsaved. We need to be busy casting the Gospel net into the sea of humanity.

C. The Catch (47) – Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. As the fishermen cast the large net into the sea, they had no way of controlling which type of fish the net would catch. As the net was dragged through the water, it snared every fish that swam against it. When the net was gathered to shore, it held fish of every kind. As we will see, some were desirable and others were not, but the net caught all kinds.

- As believers, we must be about the business of casting the net, hoping to catch something. If you have fished very much, you know each cast isn't successful. You have no control over which fish will be caught and which ones get away. We must simply be diligent in casting the Gospel net, trying to reach all we can for Christ. We can't save them. Our efforts do not bring about regeneration and transformation in Christ; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. We cast the net and leave the results to Christ.

II. The Proficiency of the Net (48) – Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. Consider the ability the net has to catch fish.

A. The Accumulation – As the men fished, eventually the net became full and was drawn to shore. The net was designed to catch fish. A net in good repair was very proficient in catching fish if they were in the water. When a school of fish was encountered, the net would secure a great catch.

- While our world continues to deteriorate socially and spiritually, many question the relevance of the Gospel in our modern culture. Some tend to believe the efforts to reach others for Christ are of little value today. The Gospel net is as powerful today as it has ever been. People remain in need of salvation. Many of them are seeking for hope, peace, and security. The Spirit continues to work in the hearts of those who are yet unsaved. If we will be faithful to cast the net, eventually there will be a harvest.

B. The Separation – Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. As the men fished, they caught fish of every kind. Some were desirable and others were not. When the net was drawn to shore, the fishermen inspected the catch to see what they had caught. The desirable fish were placed in a vessel to be sold or eaten. The weeds, trash, and undesirable fish were cast away. They only kept the good fish.

- As we will see in a moment, from a spiritual perspective, it is not our place to separate the catch. The Lord will see to that. However, the Lord's parable reveals a truth we cannot deny. The Gospel net is attractive to many. Sadly, some never genuinely repent of sin and believe in Christ

by faith for salvation. As we learned with the parable of the seed and the soils, all are not saved. The church has all types of people who attend services. Some have been saved by grace and genuinely desire to serve the Lord. Others may be under conviction and are genuinely seeking the Lord. Others have made a profession, but they have never been saved. They are trusting in religious activities and works of the flesh. There are some who are affiliated with the church for personal gain, having no desire for salvation and service, but merely seeking benefit from the church. Simply, some are saved and others remain in sin, unsaved.

III. The Principle in the Net (49-50) – Here Jesus reveals the divine principle of the net as it relates to the Kingdom. Consider:

A. The Schedule (49a) – *So shall it be at the end of the world.* Jesus reveals the aspects of fishing and harvest will be carried out at the end of the age. There is an appointed time on the calendar of God when Christ will come again to establish His kingdom here on earth. Following the Millennial Reign of 1,000 years, judgment will come. The opportunities for salvation will have concluded, and those who remain on the earth will be caught in the net of the Lord. None will escape His gaze. Those who have received Him will be accepted into the glories of heaven and those who have rejected salvation will face His wrath and judgment.

B. The Sovereignty (49) – *So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth...* As I shared a moment ago, the work of inspection and separation will not be done by mere mortals with human wisdom and reasoning. God will send His angels to come forth and examine those within the Kingdom. There will be no mistake and the verdict will be final. When judgment comes, the standing of men at that moment will settle their eternal destiny.

- This will be a moment of great sorrow and desperation for many. They will have been exposed to the grace of God, and yet made the decision to reject salvation in Christ. They may have been a member of the church, active in many services, doing great works of service, and yet never receiving Christ as Savior. The angels will know those who belong to Christ and those who are yet unsaved.

C. The Severance (49b-50a) – *the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,* ^[50a] *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire.* As the angels come forth on the Day of Judgment, they will separate the just from the unjust. Those who have received Christ by faith will be separated from those who have rejected Him, choosing their own path instead. The saved by grace will be reserved for heaven and the unsaved will be cast into the furnace of fire.

▪ This is a truth that many choose to deny today. They refuse to accept that God will judge the rebellious in judgment. The Lord reveals the destiny of all who reject Him. There is no other means of salvation. Christ alone can save from sin and reconcile to God. Apart from a relationship with Christ in salvation, judgment and wrath will come. [Rev.20:12-15 – And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.](#) ^[13] [And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.](#) ^[14] [And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.](#) ^[15] [And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.](#)

D. The Suffering (50b) – **there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.** Jesus affirms the great suffering and torment that waits all who reject His gracious offer of salvation. These will be cast into the lake of fire, eternally separated from God, condemned in judgment, and forced to spend eternity in the unimaginable miseries it brings. This will be no party. There will be no celebrating or enjoyment. It will be an eternity of endless suffering, misery, and pain.

▪ As difficult as that is to imagine, it is reality. There is good news however; none have to spend eternity in the lake of fire. Christ died so all might be saved. He gave His life as the atoning sacrifice for sin. He rose triumphant over death, securing eternal life for the saved. You can escape the sufferings of the lake of fire and enjoy the beauties of heaven in Christ.

Conclusion: This parable presents a great challenge to the saved and unsaved. For those who are yet unsaved, repent of your sin and receive Christ by faith in salvation. You are in this service, exposed to the Gospel. There is no reason for you to leave this place apart from Christ in sin.

For the believer, this parable serves as a reminder of the urgent need in our day. We cannot save anyone, but we can share the Gospel with those who need to hear. We can do our part to reach them before it is too late. Whatever need you may have, I urge you to bring that to Christ today. Don't put it off another moment!