

Series: Parables
Title: Like Unto a Net
Text: Matthew 13: 47-50
Date: September 4, 2014
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

In Matthew 13, the Lord Jesus preached to a great multitude of people. He spoke in parables. A parable is an earthly, natural illustration which sets forth heavenly, spiritual truth. Our text is the parable of the kingdom of heaven compared "Like unto a Net."

Matthew 13:47: 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.

Here the Lord declares that soon the church of God will be complete, and there will be a day of judgment in which God will separate the righteous from the wicked.

LIKE UNTO A NET

The gospel of the kingdom of heaven which we preach is compared to a net. This is not the kind of net that a fisherman casts alone. The kind of net spoken of here is a drag net which requires many fisherman working together. It is like the huge nets you see on large shrimp boats.

Christ makes his ministers "fishers of men." But it is the power of God our Savior who gathers his people, making the gospel effectual in our hearts. He showed us an example using fish when he called his apostles.

Luke 5: 1: And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, 2: And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3: And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4: Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5: And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6: And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7: And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8: When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9: For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11: And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

What a great illustration of the power of our Sovereign Savior to call his people into his kingdom through the gospel net! What a great illustration of our total inability to draw any sinner, except it be at Christ's word! Except Christ speak the word, we toil all the night and catch nothing!

CAST INTO THE SEA

The sea into which the net is cast is the world. There is a description which the Holy Spirit gives of the creatures of the sea that serves as a good description of all sinners throughout this vast world.

Psalm 104: 25: So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. 26: There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. 27: These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. 28: That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. 29: Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Like the net is cast into the sea, the Lord Jesus gives his ministers and church the charge to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature—to every kind of sinner.

Matthew 28: 18: And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

EVERY KIND

Notice, this net “gathered of every kind” of fish. It is true that God’s elect are redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev 14: 6) But the meaning here is that there will be others in the visible church which are not regenerated, converted children of God. They are those with only a form of godliness but which have not been born of the power of God.

Christ does not tell us who his elect are. He simply charges us to cast the net into the sea—to go and preach the gospel in all the world, to every kind of sinner.

Mark 16: 15: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Those who truly believe, who truly enter into the kingdom of God, enter by Christ and our Father sending forth the Holy Spirit to regenerate and give faith and repentance.

Acts 5:31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Our great High Priest promises...

John 16: 7:...I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8: And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9: Of sin, because they believe not on me;

The Holy Spirit will effectually convince each of God’s elect of their sins, and that they are under their sins, because they believe not on Christ.

John 16: 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

The Holy Spirit will effectually convince each of Christ’s blood-bought children that Christ is our Righteousness. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is the Righteousness of God. He is the true believers complete

and total fulfillment of all righteousness. We know Christ is our Righteousness because God has raised him again for our justification to the right hand of God in glory! And in him, God has raised each one for whom he died! (Rom 4: 25; Eph 2: 6)

John 16: 11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. [it is finished!]

The Holy Spirit will convince each of Christ's sheep that "all judgment" is committed to Christ by the Father, so that our GodMan Mediator has all power in heaven and in earth and is appointed to judge the world at the last day. Satan's head is crushed because Christ has triumphed victoriously. We believe on Christ when God our Father "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col 1: 13)

Acts 2:36: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

WHEN IT WAS FULL

Christ shall not cease to send his ministers with his gospel until each and every elect child is gathered. In the parable he says, "Which, when it was full, they drew to shore." (Mt 13: 48) Who determines when the net is full? Christ does! When he has called the last blood-bought member of his body to faith and knowledge of him then his kingdom will be full. Therefore, Christ shall continue to give his ministers...

Ephesians 4: 13: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

This perfect man is the fullness of Christ's body, made up of each and every chosen, redeemed, regenerated, believer.

Ephesians 1: 22: [Christ is] the head over all things to the church, 23: Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance....15: And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;

GOOD AND BAD

There are some in the visible church which are not Christ's true redeemed people. He says in the parable, "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,..." (Mt 13: 48-49)

As Christ preached that very day there was a mixed multitude present. Multitudes followed him of their own depraved wills for vain reasons. But his true disciples were called by Christ irresistibly by his grace. So it will be until the end.

Matthew 13: 10: And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

God sent them the gospel but they would not hear; so God took away what he had given them, turning them over to judicial blindness so they could not hear.

Matthew 13: 13: Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest [to prevent] at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16: But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

But Peter, like you and I, did not know, only Christ did. Three times in these parables our Lord tells us that his church in this world is a mixed congregation. We do not know who are truly washed in his blood and who are not. But Christ our Head knows. Throughout his walk on this earth we read things like:

Luke 6: 7: And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. 8: But he knew their thoughts,...

John 2: 23: Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24: But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all...

He knows those that are his because we were chosen of God in him in eternity. Our names were written "in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev 13: 8) It is God that justified us; it is Christ that died, who everlives to make intercession for us. Christ created us in his righteousness and holiness. But the wicked merely have a name that they live but are dead.

IN THE END OF THE WORLD

Christ tells us what shall be in the end of the world. He says, "They shall draw the net to shore and gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just..." (Mt 13: 48-49)

Illustration: Running nets with Sonny M.

While a net is in the water the fisherman cannot tell what kinds of fish are in the net. He just feels a net full of fish, so he expects it to be a good catch. It is not until the fisherman draws the net to shore, taking the fish out of their natural environment, that the fisherman can tell which are good and which are bad.

When Christ brings the net ashore, Christ will take us all out of this world, out of our environment, into his holy presence. Those who are justified by Christ's blood are made meet, right now, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

1 John 4:17: Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

But imagine attempting to come into the presence of Holiness without Christ being made unto you Righteousness and Sanctification—without the wedding garment of his Righteousness and Holiness! Then the angels of God will make it obvious as they "sever the wicked from among the just." Our Lord and Savior declared,

Matthew 7: 21: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

The will of God the Father is that his people believe on Christ his Son. (Mt 17: 5) They asked the Lord, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (Jn 6: 28-29) Christ said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Oh, sinner, rest all your eternal salvation on Christ the Rock! He is the Rock that never fails!

CAST INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE

Lastly, the Lord declares that the wicked shall be cast out, "And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Mt 13: 50)

What a terrifying truth! Hell is real! Christ spoke about hell more than he spoke about the love of God. None can comprehend how tormenting hell will really be. The words used to describe it are suited to our understanding, like as Christ is called the Door, the Way, the Rock, the Rose of Sharon.

Hell is described here as a "furnace of fire" where there will be "wailing and gnashing of teeth." In other places, scripture describe hell as the "depths of hell"; the "bottomless pit" (Pro 9: 18; Rev 9: 2); the "pains of hell" (Ps 116: 3); "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mr 9: 45-46); never ending "destruction of soul and body" (Mt 10: 28); "outer darkness" (Mt 25: 30); "blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 1:13)

So we see that hell will not be annihilation; hell will last forever and forever. Those who shall be cast out will "be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Rev 20: 10) Christ describes hell as the torment of unfulfilled desires, while you watch all the saints enjoying the goodness of God. Of the rich man, Christ said,

Luke 16: 23:...in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24: And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Here is why men will perish in hell.

2 Thessalonians 1: 6: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8: In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10: When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

SHOE LEATHER

Believer, hell is what we deserved: by Adam's transgression, by our conception and by our sin against God. But Christ took our sins and bore the hell we deserved on Calvary's cross as our Substitute. We should read

those awful descriptions of hell often and remember Christ bore that for me! He bore our second death before he died the first death. Christ shut the wailing and gnashing mouth of hell for us. He quenched the flames of justice for us. We will never know, till we are conformed to his image, how greatly he suffered hell for us to secure our pardon! Brethren, take heed to the Holy Spirit's word through the apostle Peter:

2 Peter 1: 10: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And beloved, as you think of hell, remember your unconverted friends and family. Invite them to hear the gospel. Warn them!

For you who find yourself having an interest in Christ for the first time, it is the mercy of God to awaken you to flee from the just wrath of God. Your unconverted friends will tell you there is no need of being so anxious. But there is every reason to flee from the wrath to come! Give yourself to learn, how precious Christ is; he is a hiding place from the wind, and covert from the tempest. Nothing in this world is worth holding on to. Count it all dung for the Lord Jesus. He is all in all. Take no rest till you can say, 'I am his and he is mine.'

For you who keep hardening your hearts, you are fools and you think you are wise! I beseech you, search the scriptures. Do not take my word about an eternal hell, it is the testimony of God. You think you are wise, you think I am a fanatic, but you will soon gnash your teeth and wail in pain. The moment you take your last breath you will find your soul in the presence of God. Then you will know this word is true. The judgment of God is inescapable.

2 Corinthians 5: 10: we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11: Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

If we meet God outside of Christ, our good will be the same as our bad—"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is 64: 6) Sinner, Christ died for a multitude no man can number. I am telling you what Ezekiel commanded the valley of dry bones, when he said, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." Obey the gospel of God today! Flee to Christ! Rest in Christ from all your works, from all your so-called goodness, from your so-called wisdom because your own worst enemy is you! Turn from you to Christ and believe on him.

Hebrews 12: 25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

The only way of salvation is Christ Jesus the Righteous.

Hebrews 2:3: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!

Oh, may God give us grace to heed these words!

Amen!