

Review

In our last study, we saw that Jesus had compared the church to both a pearl of great price and a hidden treasure. To own the treasure of the church cost the Lord everything - the death of His only begotten Son.

Now, Jesus continues teaching in parables with the parable of the dragnet.

13:47-48 Parable Of The Dragnet

A dragnet had weights on the bottom and floats at the top. It would be thrown into the water, making what was essentially a curved wall of net. As it was dragged back in, it would catch everything in its path - both edible and inedible fish. Fishermen would always have to separate the good from the bad.

No doubt the disciples understood the concept of the net. After all, it was just back in chapter four that we saw Jesus calling men to follow Him.

Matt. 4:18-19 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He *said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

And in Luke 5, we saw that even when the guys were actually fishing, Jesus directed them where to put their nets.

Luke 5:6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish...

And Jesus said to them...

Luke 5:10 "...from now on you will be catching men."

And so the guys casting the net in the parable were the ones preaching the gospel. They caught men, but not just the ones who belonged in the net.

Notice this - when we preach the gospel, it is not just those who are truly born again that gather. When we evangelize, when we fish for men, many more are caught up than just the "good fish."

This makes the parable strikingly similar to the previous ones, in which Jesus said the kingdom was like poisonous weeds planted in the midst of good wheat, in which Jesus said the fellowship would be permeated with sin, and that the kingdom would be far larger than it was supposed to be, and even be hospitable to the devil's ambassadors.

This shouldn't sound strange to us. After all, even Jesus' ministry attracted followers that didn't believe in Him. They were there for motives other than faith. Maybe it was the healings, maybe it was the free food. But ultimately, they didn't believe. They didn't belong in the net.

And this parable shows us that the end of those who inhabit the kingdom without being citizens of the kingdom have a horrible future in store for them. Read what Jesus describes...

13:49-50 Explaining The Parable

At the end of the age, there will be a separation. In the same way that the tares were separated from the wheat and burned, so too the bad fish will be thrown away - the wicked will be thrown into the furnace of fire.

Now, notice that these two verses are not the parable, they are the explanation of the parable. They are the reality. Angels are real. Judgment is real. And the furnace of fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth is real. Hell is a real place, and real people who really don't choose God's forgiveness really go there.

What should this teach us? It is that although all of us are in church, not all of us are in the family of God. All of us are in the net, but not all of us are good fish. All of us are being gathered together, but some will be separated and end up in hell.

Paul the apostle knew that he was in the net, but he desperately wanted to make sure that he was also one of the good fish. He said,

1Cor. 9:23-27 And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

If Paul was concerned about making sure he was a “good fish,” then how much more should we pursue godliness, ensuring that we are too?

13:51 Have You Understood?

After this intensely deep teaching, Jesus asked the guys if they had understood these things. I can't help but wonder what Jesus was thinking as His disciples said to Him, “Yup. We understand. No problem here. Got it all. Comprendo, senior.”

In my younger days as a Christian, I was pretty sure I had all knowledge. I could listen to a Bible study and think, “Not only do I already know everything he's teaching, I could point out many things that he missed.”

But today, I am much different. The more I have learned about the Scriptures and from the Scriptures, the more I don't have a problem admitting that which I do not know. Some of these parables, I think, “I don't have a clue.” And that's okay, because I'm so much more teachable when I admit that I don't know.

13:52 A Scribe Who Becomes A Disciple

The Scribes were those who copied the Scriptures by hand. In the days before printing presses, they were the ones who made copies of the Bible. Imagine how much head knowledge they must have had, writing these things out! And yet, because the Holy Spirit was not dwelling inside them, they didn't have a real knowledge of these things that they had so much knowledge about. Paul told the Corinthians that they had a veil in front of their face, which could only be removed in Christ.

2Cor. 3:14-16 ...their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

I have met several people in my lifetime that had a lot of intellectual head knowledge about the Bible and theology and such. But they couldn't make the word alive to those who listened to them teach, because they didn't truly have understanding.

That's why it's so important for us to have a balance of heads and hearts. With our heads, we understand and comprehend these things intellectually. But in our hearts, they become alive and are truly treasure. When you have a combination of a teacher who has a whole lot of knowledge and a huge heart for God, then it's wonderful to receive from him.

13:53-58 Jesus In His Hometown

Jesus had both head knowlege and a heart for God. But as He taught, the people in His synagogue were offended. They wouldn't receive His teaching. And because they wouldn't receive His teaching, they couldn't receive the miracles that God wanted to do in their midst.

Saints, this is so important: When people take offense at the teaching of the Word, God will not do many miracles there. And so we must be receiving the teaching of the Word before we will truly be able to receive the miracles written about in the Word.