

## Matthew 13:47-50. The Parable of the Fish Net

Introduction: How many have seen fish nets of some kind? This is the seventh and last of the kingdom parables. The kingdom parables teach concerning Christianity in the church age. In each parable the kingdom is likened unto something. Here it (Christianity) is likened unto a fish net. Yet not like the net only, but like the whole story concerning the net. There are four parts to the parable.

### I. The net cast into the sea, Verse 47.

#### A. The net was apparently a seine.

1. The net is made of strong twine with cork along the top edge and lead along the bottom edge. (Some professional fishermen use nets about ½ mile long.)
2. The seine hangs in an upright position in the water and is placed there for the purpose of catching fish.

#### B. The casting of the net in the sea pictures the coming of Christianity into the world.

1. It begins with the coming of Christ and His ministry.
2. It includes the founding of the New Testament church system.
3. It includes the sending out of the gospel message.
4. Just as the net was intended to catch fish, even so Christianity is intended to catch men, Matthew 4:19.

### II. The good and the bad caught in the net, Verses 47-48.

#### A. The good fish are those that were edible and thus were good for one's own personal food and good for sale at the market.

#### B. The bad were inedible.

1. They had a foul odor or were too bony, or were poisonous.
2. At any rate they were not good for one's own table nor good for the market.

#### C. The good fish is the kind the fishermen were after and represent those who get saved as a result of the gospel.

1. They were not good in their unsaved condition, Romans 3:23.
2. But they were made good in the new birth and by the cleansing blood, 1 John 1:7.
3. This is what the preaching of the gospel is all about.

#### D. The bad fish are not what the fishermen are after at all and these represent those who are unsaved who are caught in the net of Christianity.

1. These are not unsaved people out in the world at large, but unsaved people in Christianity. (Not necessarily in a true New Testament church, but in Christianity.)
2. These are not saved people who have erred doctrinally or morally, but those who have never been saved.
3. Some are very active in Christian work.
4. Some are Christian leaders.
5. It is no wonder that doctrines and practices have been introduced in Christianity that are totally foreign to God's word.

### III. The net left in the water for a while.

#### A. In the parable the net is left in the water long enough for the fish to get in it.

#### B. This represents the entire span of the gospel age.

1. God allows time for men to hear the gospel and get saved.
2. Sometimes we are made to wonder why God delays the time of the end, but He has a purpose in the delay.

IV. The net pulled to shore and the fish separated.

- A. In the parable there finally comes the time to drag the net to shore and separate the good fish from the bad. (This represents the time of the end when the saved are separated from the unsaved.)
- B. The parable portrays the good fish being placed in vessels to be carried home or to the market.
  1. This represents the saved being carried to glory.
  2. In His interpretation of the parable Jesus did not elaborate on the eternal glory of the saved.
- C. The parable speaks of the bad fish being cast away.
  1. Here the interpretation of Jesus takes a strange twist.
  2. Even though there was no mention of fire whatsoever in the parable, yet in His interpretation Jesus places a great deal of stress upon it.
  3. He interprets the casting away of the bad fish to represent the unsaved being cast into the fires of hell, verses 49-50.
  4. Since this is a repetition of what He said in His interpretation of the parable of the tares, there is multiplied stress upon the reality of hell fire, verses 41-42.
- D. But note this about these men.
  1. They had joined Christianity, but they will go to hell anyway.
  2. They may have joined a true church, but they will go to hell anyway.
  3. They may have proper mode of baptism, but they will go to hell anyway.
  4. Some are active Christians, but they will go to hell anyway.
  5. Some are Christian leaders, but they will go to hell anyway.
  6. Some have been big name television Christian leaders, but they will go to hell anyway.

Conclusion:

1. The question is not "Are you in the net (a Christian), but are you saved?"
2. If not then it is high time that you get saved. (Don't wait until the net is drug in. That is too late.)
3. If you are saved then God wants your Christian service. The parable is not against Christian service, but only against depending on it for salvation.

Preached at Pleasant Hill M.B.C. 4-15-84 A.M.