

The Parables of Jesus #10
The Parable of the Dragnet
(Mt. 13:47-50)
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INTRODUCTION

A. Have you ever asked the question, "What difference does it make?"

1. Sometimes that's a question of despair
2. Sometimes it's a question betraying our lack of understanding about something
3. If one thing doesn't make a difference over another thing, then it doesn't matter which one you choose
4. If one does make a difference, then we want to choose the thing that will benefit us the most

B. It is the fact that the kingdom of heaven makes a difference that is behind the the parable of the dragnet

1. Matt 13:47-50

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (NKJ)

2. Does it make a difference what kind of relationship one has with God?
3. Does it make a difference whether or not one is in the kingdom?
4. Why should a person be concerned about these things at all?

C. This is another short, uncomplicated story told to illustrate important truths about the kingdom

1. This would have been an amazingly clear illustration to people in Jesus' day
2. Even for us, it's easy to see what Jesus is telling us about the kingdom

I. THE PARABLE

A. Remember we must connect the kingdom to the picture Jesus is describing

1. Here, the kingdom is not simply like a net used to catch fish
2. The description Jesus gave is that the kingdom is like both the net and the purpose for which it is used
3. The focus is not on the net, but the results after the net is used

B. Simple elements of the story

1. The net
 - a. Gk: sagene -- netted rope used for various purposes, from a saddle bag to a fishing net
 - b. we get our word "seine" from this word
2. The net was cast into the sea
 - a. that is, of course, what fishermen do -- I have read that the net may have been 1/2 a mile long in those days -- sometimes several miles long today
 - b. it's purpose was to capture everything that came within its path
 - c. when the net was full, the fishermen would pull it near the shore and there sort the catch
3. The process of sorting the catch
 - a. it was necessary to sort the fish they wanted from those they didn't want
 - b. some fish were unuseable, too small, not good to eat, etc.

C. Basically, that's the story that Jesus said illustrated the kingdom

1. A picture most people would have seen many times, or at least been familiar with
2. But, get the point, the kingdom of heaven is like that net, thrown into the sea, catching fish, and then the fishermen sorting through and keeping only the good

II. JESUS ALSO GAVE AN EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE

A. He doesn't always give an explanation, but he does to this one

1. Perhaps he didn't want anyone to miss the meaning of this one
2. Perhaps he wanted them to know why it matters to be in the kingdom

B. His explanation is one of judgment

1. He goes right to the end of the story where the fishermen are sorting through the catch
2. There will come a day when the sorting process that separates the just from the wicked will look much like fishermen sorting their catch

C. We have some idea about the meaning of the elements of the story

1. The sea = the world; all of mankind (similar to the field in Mt 13:38)
2. The net = the kingdom of God in its broad sense
 - a. we sometimes think of kingdom as always meaning the church
 - b. kingdom can also refer to the power, authority or rule of God
 - c. in that view, all the world is subject to God's authority
3. The fishermen = God's angels, used in judgment
 - a. Matt 13:39
The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. (NKJ)
 - b. Matt 13:41
The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness (NKJ)
 - c. II Th 1:7
and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, (NKJ)
4. The shore = the place or time of judgment
5. The sorting of the fish = judgment; separation of the just from the wicked

D. The point is clear

1. The kingdom makes a difference in terms of judgment
2. The good fish represent the just -- they are harvested for God
3. The bad fish represent the wicked -- they are cast away

E. The destiny of the two kinds of fish represent the magnitude of the difference between being in the kingdom and not being in it

1. The wicked will be thrown into the fire
2. The just shall receive a completely opposite reward

III. LESSONS TO LEARN

A. Though not the point of this story, it does cause one to think about how to become one of the "good" fish

1. The fact is that it's going to make a difference some day
2. When the angels come to sort out the just from the wicked, which group will you belong to?
3. The just will be those who put their faith in Jesus

B. There are many verses that speak of the confidence that Christians can have in facing that time of judgment

1. Col 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (NKJ)

2. 1 Pet 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (NKJ)

3. 2 Pet 1:10-11

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (NKJ)

4. Rev 3:20-21

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (NKJ)

5. Rev 21:27

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (NKJ)

CONCLUSION

A. Some things definitely do make a difference - a vital, important difference

1. The fishermen in the story understood
2. If we understand the action of the angels in judgment, then we must understand the great difference it makes to be among the just

B. What's kingdom like --

1. A net that gathers many kinds of fish
2. The fishermen bring the catch to the shore
3. They separate out only the good fish and discard the bad
4. It's a fair picture of the judgment of God
5. Which group will you be in?

C. Invitation