

"The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ"

Part 26

Matthew 13

Introduction: Tonight, as we return to our study of the Kingdom, we are on the 26th study which means we have been in the study for six months now and we still have a long way to go. This evening we are going to look at the seventh parable which our Lord gave to His disciples. We have looked at six of the eight so far:

1. The Sower
2. The Wheat and the Tares
3. The Mustard Seed
4. The Leaven
5. The Hidden Treasure
6. The Pearl of Great price

Each of these parables is very important to understand because they tell us what to expect in this age in which we live while Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. To have the wrong understanding of these parables is to be confused about what we see happening in Christendom today. Those who teach we are in the Kingdom now must do all kinds of spiritual gymnastics in order to get these parables to fit their theology. For example, they believe the world is going to see the increase of righteousness through the preaching of the Gospel until it basically becomes "Christianized" and then Jesus will come back. That theology runs contrary to the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and the Parable of the Net which we shall see tonight. They also must make the leaven in verse 33 the Gospel which runs contrary to every use of leaven in the Scriptures. Leaven in the Bible is portrayed as evil so we have no right to change it in Matthew 13.

These parables cover the time from the birth of the church in Acts 2 clear through Revelation 19 when Jesus will return to the earth.

Revelation 19:11-16

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

¹³ *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

¹⁴ *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

¹⁵ *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

¹⁶ *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

In between the birth of the church and the return of Jesus Christ is the rapture which we read about in 1 Thessalonians 4. So, we need to understand that these parables deal with what we shall see as the church and then what the Tribulation believers will see in the seven-year Tribulation period.

➤ The Parable of the Net

Notice Matthew 13:47

I want to begin by looking at several symbolic pictures here and then we shall look at the overall picture.

The net here would represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The sea would represent the Gentile nations.

Revelation 13:1

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

We have looked at this before but just as a reminder the Anti-Christ will rise out of the sea which is the Gentile nations. So, the net that is cast in our parable is cast into the sea which is symbolic of the Gentile nations. The fish that are caught are the souls of people who have heard the Gospel but not all are believers as we shall see.

Notice Matthew 13:48

The fishermen here are those who are believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:16-18

¹⁶ Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

¹⁷ And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

¹⁸ And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Before we move on in this parable I want to pause here and consider what it means to be a fisher of men for the Lord.

a. It is commanded.

Mark 16:15-18

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.

¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

When we "cast the net"/share the Gospel, we are then walking in obedience to the Lord. It is our responsibility to live our lives in such a way that we do not hinder the message of the Gospel from going forth into the lives of others. Noticed what Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

¹⁹ For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

²⁰ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

²² *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

²³ *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

b. It can be a difficult task.

When I look at the parable and consider fisherman casting a net into the sea, I am reminded that to catch fish they need to be willing to endure the storms. They had to be willing to exert physical labor. It takes effort to cast a net and it takes strength to pull it in when it is full of fish.

Application:

For us to be obedient to the Great Commission we are going to have to put forth an effort. There are going to be times when we are going to have to endure storms if we are going to cast the net. There will be storms of rejection, storms of ridicule, and storms of hatred.

Acts 7:51-54, 57-60

⁵¹ *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

⁵² *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:*

⁵³ *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

⁵⁴ *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

⁵⁷ *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

⁵⁸ *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

⁵⁹ *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

⁶⁰ *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

Let us remember the storms Paul endured to cast the net.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

²³ *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

²⁴ *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

²⁵ *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

²⁶ *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

²⁷ *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

²⁸ *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

Many have endured great storms to proclaim the Gospel and the reason they were willing to endure was because they believed what the Bible said about a person who died in their sins.

Now let us get back to our parable.

Notice Matthew 13:48

We need to notice that not every fish caught in the net was good. The idea here is that not every person who follows Jesus Christ is a true believer. Let us look back to the Tares and the Wheat.

Matthew 13:37-39

³⁷ *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;*

³⁸ *The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

³⁹ *The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.*

The Tares are people who have believed a false gospel which Satan has made to be proclaimed. I believe the "bad fish" in the net are people who would have a head knowledge of the Gospel but never came to the place where it entered into the heart.

Matthew 7:21-23

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.*

Here in Matthew 7 are a group of people who were followers of Jesus Christ but they have never allowed the Gospel to enter their hearts and change their lives. They were never saved. They blended in with the good fish but God knows the heart and the heart was never changed. They were never born again.

➤ **The Application**

Notice Matthew 13:49

Here is a very interesting verse. We see that this parable is applied to the end of the age which would be the end of the Tribulation. So, this parable deals with unbelievers from the church age who live into the Tribulation and it deals with believers and unbelievers of the Tribulation. The reason I say this is because we and part of the just but we will not be on the earth at the end of the age to be separated from the wicked. We will be raptured away before the Tribulation. I believe we see another picture of this separation in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24: 36-42

³⁶ *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

³⁷ *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

³⁸ *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,*

³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Conclusion:

There are several lessons from this parable but there is just one I want to point out. The wicked will not diminish as time moves forward but they will exist until the end of the age.