

Matthew 13:47-52: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea & gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore & sat down & sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out & separate the evil from the righteous & throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." & he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new & what is old."

Intro: We finish, today, the parables Jesus told about the kingdom of heaven. The last two Sundays we've meditated on parables about the value or worth of the kingdom of heaven: the parable of the treasure hidden in a field and the parable of the pearl of great price. We learned that having Jesus and His kingdom is worth selling everything, with joy, just to have Him and His kingdom. Today we come to another parable, a parable that's very similar to the parable of the wheat & the tares/weeds: the parable of the dragnet. We're reminded: God will judge! (God saves!) Jesus also encourages His disciples to teach others what they've learned: the old & the new!

1. The Dragnet Of Good And Bad Fish

Matt. 13:47-48: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea & gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore & sat down & sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.

a. The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea: Many believe this net to be a dragnet, a very large net: **Lenski:** "Some of these nets covered one-half mile of area" - very large nets. They were dragged by boats, and they would catch everything in the sea! So every kind of fish would be caught.

b. Fish of every kind were caught in this net: (A brief side point): Every ethnicity; every calling; every personality; every gender; young and old; rich and poor; smart and not so smart; beautiful (Rachel) and not so beautiful (Leah and Jesus): **Revelation 5:9:** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation

c. "Every kind's" main focus is on the good and the bad: V. 48: When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.

Some fish were good for eating and selling on the market to bring a profit and some where not.

2. The Close Of The Age And The Dreadful Day Of Judgment

Matthew 13:49-50: So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

a. There will be a judgment and solemn separation: 1) Jesus did not come the first time to immediately bring about the fullness of the kingdom of heaven.
2) As the kingdom of heaven comes, the righteous & the wicked will dwell together in the world until the final judgment
3) Some of the wicked will be hypocrites and false professors in the church.
4) Sin and the wicked will remain in the world until the final judgment. (Helps answer the problem of evil!)
5) There will be a great separation of the righteous & the wicked at the final judgment.
6) We must exercise a measure of patience until the day of final judgment comes because God is patient.
7) At the final judgment, all sin will cease in the kingdom & all the wicked will justly be cast into a fiery hell forever.
8) All the righteous will shine like the sun, they'll be glorified, and be with Christ forever where there's fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore!
9) Though there will be great opposition, God will accomplish all His purposes for His kingdom and no obstacle, no devil in hell, will ever stop Him!

- Of the Righteous and the Wicked: We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

- Of the World to Come: We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

b. Judgment will happen in a fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth: Mark 9:47-48: And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

Jonathan Edwards: The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of purer eyes than to bear you in his sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince, and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God provoking his pure eye by your sinful, wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell. O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in! It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of Divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder . . . It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see along forever a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul. And you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages in wrestling with this Almighty, merciless vengeance. And then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point [dot] to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh! who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it. It is inexpressible and inconceivable: for "who knows the power of God's anger"! How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh! that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation, now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him!

Mavis (Standing Outside): Judgment is surely coming, coming to you and me; We will be judged that morning, for all eternity; Some will go into heaven, others will be denied; Will you be in that number, standing outside?

Standing outside the portals, standing outside denied; Knowing that with the demons, ever you shall abide
Never to share the beauty, awaiting the sanctified; Oh! what an awful picture, standing outside.

Standing outside while loved ones, enter the pearly gate; Knowing that there forever, you will then separate
To be away from loved ones and by our God denied; Oh! what an awful picture, standing outside?

Can you not see the picture of those who're lost in sin; Standing outside the portals, without a hope to win
Soul-crushed with deepest sorrow, without a friend to guide; Oh! what an awful picture, standing outside.

It's so awful to be standing outside because Jesus is not present outside in His love & grace & mercy! But He is present in hell in His wrath & justice & fury! Hell belongs to Jesus! A most powerful statement on hell:

c. Hell is Christ's hell: Charles Spurgeon: It is the iron crown of hell, for Christ reigneth there supreme. Not only in the dazzling brightness of heaven, but in the black impenetrable darkness of hell is his omnipotence felt, & his sovereignty acknowledged; the chains which bind damned spirits are the chains of his strength; the fires which burn are the fires of his vengeance; the burning rays that scorch through their eyeballs, & melt their very heart, are flashed from his vindictive eye. There is no power in hell besides his. The very devils know his might. He chaineth the great dragon. If he give him a temporary liberty, yet is the chain in his hand, & he can draw him back lest he go beyond his limit. Hell trembles at him. The very howlings of lost spirits are but deep bass notes of his praise. While in heaven the glorious notes shout forth his goodness; in hell the deep growlings resound his justice, & his certain victory over all his foes. Thus his empire is higher than the highest heaven, & deeper than the lowest hell.

Jesus is King! Even of hell and in hell! He's King of hell; He's King in hell; He's King over hell! And He's the only King Who saves from hell! That's my King! Do you know Him?! **GOSPEL!**

3. Understanding The Parables Of The Kingdom

Matthew 13:51-52: "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." & he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new & what is old."

a. Jesus asks His disciples if they understand: This is important! Jesus' disciples must understand the Words of Jesus! We must understand the Words of Jesus! They and we must understand the Word of God!

Daniel Doriani: They quickly say they have. We are tempted to laugh. Have they truly understood everything – the hiddenness, small beginnings, the surprising form, and the supreme value of the kingdom? Do they know Jesus is the sower and the judge? Succeeding events show that they do not. They try to send away the crowds whom Jesus wants to serve (14:14-15). They flatly tell Jesus he is wrong when he says he must die on the cross (16:21-22). No, they have not understood everything. But they have believed what they understood. More important, they are ready to act upon it. (When young lovers tell each other "I love you so much!")

b. Only God can give understanding and God must give understanding: Matthew 16:16-17: Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

c. Jesus' disciples were scribes of the kingdom (we should be too!): The Jewish scribes were experts in the law and Word of God: they read it, studied it, interpreted it, wrote about it, and taught it – and they should have lived it!

R. T. France: While grammateus normally denotes a scribe in the technical sense of a professional teacher of the Jewish law, this literal meaning seems hardly relevant to this context, and it is more likely that Jesus is designating his disciples (who had no formal training) as the "scribes" of the kingdom of heaven. The teaching he has given has trained them. In comparing them to a householder who bring out of his treasure . . . Jesus is not merely

describing them, but as usual in parables is challenging them to fulfill a role: they have received "treasure" through his instruction; now they are to "bring it out" in teaching others. What is new and what is old as a description of Christian teaching may include a dig at the Jewish scribes, who could produce only what was old! It also refers back to v. 35, where Jesus' new teaching is identified as going back to "the foundation of the world." It is new and revolutionary, but its validity lies in that it is grounded in God's eternal truths, now at last brought to light.

Jesus' disciples were trained by Jesus Himself! They were to hear His Words, remember His Words, study His Words, rightly interpret His Words, trust Him & His Words, obey His Words, & tell others about Him & His Words

d. Jesus' disciples were to be like masters of a house who bring out treasures, new and old: This means that they are to be teachers of God's Word who teach the whole counsel of God. They teach what's old! They don't unhitch from the Old Testament – all that Jesus taught was grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures (He came not to abolish, but to fulfill!). And they also teach what's new! They show how to rightly understand the old in light of the new! The old is full of Christ! The old points to Christ! The old is fulfilled by Christ!

Spurgeon: Don't you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road that leads to London? . . . So from every text in Scripture there is a road towards the great metropolis, Christ.

Jamaican Pastor: The whole of life must be brought under the control of Jesus Christ. And in order for the whole of life to be brought under the control of Jesus Christ, the whole of life must be brought under the control of the whole of Scripture.

Charles Quarles: 1. The Christian who carefully studies the Bible has a wealth of treasures
2. The Old Testament is like an old treasure
3. Jesus' teaching is like a new treasure
4. Both treasures are to be valued and shared

On that cross, Jesus was counted as the bad, evil fish who was cast out, cast into the fiery furnace where He wept & gashed His teeth on that cross for our sins! He is the risen treasure new & old that we need above all other treasures!

Christ Jesus Saves From Furnace Fire
In Hell Where Wrath And Holy Ire
Burn Toward Sinners In The Mire
It's Judgment That Will Never Tire
Forever Last, The Future's Dire
But Jesus Came To Quench The Fire
The Righteous One Who Does Inspire
Did All The Good God Would Require
Then Died For Sinners He'd Expire
Absorbed God's Hellfire, All, Entire
Then Rose Alive So We'd Acquire
Eternal Life, Righteous Attire
By Faith Alone He's Justifier
Through His Spirit, Sanctifier
Gives Understanding, Takes Us Higher
Worth More Than Every Jewel Sapphire
We Live Our Lives To Him Admire
For He Is All Our Joy Desire!