



Sermon Series: Mysteries: The Greatest Stories Jesus Told, part 12

Sermon Title: The Net

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, November 22, 2020

Matthew 13:47–50

Big Idea: God will someday separate those who are His from those who are not.

There are 3 truths that relate to this big idea:

Truth #1. The net of eternity is unavoidable

All of us exist within the confines of eternity. It's like an inescapable net. Fishing nets trapped every fish in its path. Fishermen hauled it out, gathered the "good" fish, and discarded the "garbage" fish.

The fish swimming around inside the dragnet are oblivious to their appointment with destiny. **Hebrews 9:27**

The Kingdom of God is like a dragnet that is sweeping along silently and unperceived through the sea of life. Like fish, we don't see it coming. We swim about within the confines of the net, rarely sensing the net is about to close around us. Many are oblivious to the reality that God's judgment inescapably encompasses us – an invisible net that is drawing us before him. Sooner or later everyone, is caught up in the net that will deposit them on the shore of God's judgment. **Matthew 13:49–50**

Truth #2. You choose your eternal destination

The angels are God's agents of separation. The net includes everyone who has ever lived. And it's about the separation of believers from unbelievers in God's judgment and the separation of the subjects of God's Kingdom from those who are not.

Jesus warned about hell. Hell is real. And the world is even now being gathered into a net of judgment that will result in a separation unto one of two destinies: heaven or hell. There is no alternative place.

A time rapidly approaches when God will separate those who are subjects of the King from those who are not.

Hell is not a pleasant place.

Jesus' descriptions are sobering. It's a place of agonized frustration. The reality ought to squelch any misguided or cavalier bravado.

- **Darkness (Matthew 8:12)**
- **Burning garbage dump infested with worms (Mark 9:48)**
- **A furnace (Matthew 13:42)**
- **Everlasting Fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:15))**
- **Torment (Luke 16:23)**

Perhaps the most arresting aspect of hell is the loneliness. In hell there are no gatherings of any kind. It's an isolation ward from which there is no release.

Truth #3. God did not create hell for you

Jesus says in **Matthew 25:41** that God created hell **“for the devil and his angels.”** Jesus came to rescue people from going to hell. **John 3:17**

Do you realize God doesn't gleefully consign people to hell? **Ezekiel 33:11**
But if you choose to reject Christ, then you are choosing hell.

Some teach that hell serves a correctional purpose, that people there eventually find redemption. Essentially, purgatory. A place for which there is no biblical support. An invention of the Medieval church.

The Bible says hell will be everlasting. **Matthew 25:46**

Hell is not a place of correction, but a place of waste. Hell is a place of hopelessness. Because it bears the weight of an eternal sentence.

Jesus then closes with a question.

The Big Question

Matthew 13:51 (NIV) — 51 “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes,” they replied.

Jesus summarizes many of his parables with that question.

- **Parable of the Soils.** Did they understand that the most reliable indicator of life is the fruit we produce? They understood.
- **Parable of wheat and weeds.** Did they understand that there are only 2 categories of people: Everyone is either wheat or a weed. They understood.
- **Parables of the Lost Son.** Did they understand that being “good” doesn't qualify you for heaven? The only thing that qualifies is you running back to the Father with empty hands and throwing yourself on His mercy. They understood.
- **The parable of the net.** Did they understand, God will someday separate those who are His from those who are not. They understood.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Is avoiding hell good motivation for someone to follow Jesus? Explain.**
- **Jesus spoke twice as much about hell than He did heaven. Why are Christians seemingly reluctant to speak about hell when Jesus thought it to important?**
- **Why does God send people to a place of torment that was made for the devil and his angels? Couldn't He just create a place of lesser torment?**
- **How would you respectfully address purgatory with someone who believes it has biblical basis?**
- **How will your witness for Christ change as you more fully understand the reality and eternality of hell?**