

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 13:47-50 | The Reality of God's Kingdom
Sunday April 28, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 13.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Announcements & sermon notes are in the foyer.

REVIEW:

We continue our verse-by-verse exposition of Matthew's Gospel today.

We have been studying the parables for seven weeks now.

Parable: *a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.*

However, these aren't regular parables in Matthew 13, but "Kingdom" based parables.

These parables—eight total—tell us something very special, unique, and different about God's Kingdom.

Matthew likes to refer to *God's Kingdom* as *The Kingdom of Heaven*.

The Kingdom of Heaven describes God's rules, regulations, governmental policies, and administration through the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings.

We've also learned that these Kingdom based parables are paradoxical.

A paradox is something that seems contradictory but isn't.

So, last Sunday, we went on a *Treasure Hunt* by studying *The Parable of the Buried Treasure* and *The Parable of the Priceless Pearl*.

And the profound spiritual truth was this...

LW MAIN KEYPOINT:

Both parables revolve around Jesus as the main character, who sacrifices everything He possesses to attain something of immense value, the Church.

The Church includes anyone who has confessed their sin, confesses Jesus as Lord, and believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as payment for their sin.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we'll study the second to last parable in Jesus' sermon.

Most of us know it as *The Parable of the Net*.

Now, keep in mind that Jesus is preaching these parables back to back, so this parable is directly on the heels of the others.

Now, we get the privilege of slowing these passages way down by studying them line by line—and that has its pros and cons.

The pros include taking the time to read, understand, and apply the profound spiritual truths we're learning.

The cons include not seeing them in the bigger context.

Nevertheless, Jesus keeps using these parables to describe and illustrate what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

And today, we come to a parable that involves eternal consequences.

We've learned that there is not one square inch of the cosmos that is not under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ.

In the beginning, God created... (Gen. 1:1).

Today, we'll learn how God's created order includes His sovereign rule over people.

Today's parable has eternal implications for you and me.

There is an eternal destiny to *The Parable of the Net*.

Here, we learn of Jesus' teachings on Heaven and Hell.

Today's parable is the same message Jesus taught in *The Parable of the Weeds*.

That tells us something—whenever Scripture, especially Jesus, repeats Himself, we are to pay attention.

The words Jesus uses at the end of this parable are identical to those in *The Parable of the Weeds*.

Those words by Jesus—the repetition—of Jesus' words today are stark, clear, and terrifying.

But please know this— Jesus says what He says—and repeats what He said—for a reason.

Jesus doesn't use stunts or gimmicks.

He teaches these things out of love.

And in a world where telling the truth has become a hate crime, we choose to tell you the truth because we, too, love you.

We will not skip over hard conversations or difficult doctrines.

Jesus wants you to know that there is a reality of God's Kingdom coming to the Earth.

That's why we pray, "***Your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.***" (Matt. 6:10)

Knowing is half the battle—the rest is up to you on whether you choose to believe the truth and apply it to your own life.

How do we apply this Parable to our lives? And why would we want to?

Because it tends to answer questions in our lives that we didn't know we had.

Let's find out if that is true today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:47—"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish,

Matthew 13:48— and when it was full, they dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out the worthless ones.

Matthew 13:49— So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the evil people from the righteous,

Matthew 13:50— and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my acts of rebellion; in keeping with your faithful love, remember me because of your goodness, Lord. (Psalm 25:7)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 13:47—"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish,

Matthew 13:48— and when it was full, they dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out the worthless ones.

This parable is one that the disciples would have immediately connected with because many of the disciples were fishermen.

So Jesus has the Disciples attention and connects their careers to profound spiritual truth.

Matthew 13:47(a)—Again, the kingdom of heaven...

The Kingdom of Heaven describes God's rules, regulations, governmental policies, and administration through the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings.

Matthew 13:47(b)—Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea.

There were different types of nets that the disciples were familiar with.

This one that Jesus references is shaped like a gigantic wall.

Your Bible may call it a dragnet—which is appropriate because that's how this net was used.

It was a vertical net that was pulled behind one boat or stretched between two boats.

These boats dragged this net through the water and sweep up huge amounts of fish and anything else that was in its path.

Matthew 13:47(c)—It collected every kind of fish,

There are at least twenty different types of fish in the Sea of Galilee.

Some were edible, and others were not, but make a note—they were all caught by the net.

The net is no respecter to the fish—it made no difference to the net.

What kind of fish it caught

It caught everything in its path.

Now, there is a hidden surprise in this verse in Greek.

Our English Bibles say, "All kinds," or "every kind, or "different kinds" of fish.

However, the Greek noun that Jesus uses is **génos**.

—(yen-chus)

KEYPOINT 1:

Génos means nation, race, people, class, and/or kind.

We get our English word, genealogy, from it.

So a more accurate translation would read— ***"It collected every race of fish."***

Now, that's a strange way of talking about fish.

And that's why English Bible translations translate it the way they do.

But Jesus just gave us a clue to the profound spiritual truth of this parable.

KEYPOINT 2:

The different kinds of fish point to the different nations of people.

In the book of Revelation, directly after God seals the nation of Israel...

Revelation 7:9—After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 7:10— And they cried out in a loud voice:
Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!

Today's parable tells us how every nation, tribe, people and language got there!

Back to our Gospel passage;

Matthew 13:47(c)— ^{NET} It collected every kind (race) of fish,

Matthew 13:48(a)— and when it (net) was full, they dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers,

It would take multiple men several hours to drag this heavy net filled with fish up to the beach.

They would sort the fish by placing all the the "good" fish into containers.

Then, they would take these "good" fish to the market to sell.

Make a note, they were only looking for “good” fish.

How do we know?

Matthew 13:48(b)— *but threw out the worthless ones.*

They threw away the bad fish.

What's a bad fish?

According to Leviticus 11:9-12, the Jews could not eat anything from the sea unless it had two things:

1. Fins
2. Scales

If it didn't have both fins and scales, it was considered unclean, which meant it had to be discarded.

So, the Jews would not book reservations at Red Lobster.

No shrimp scampi, no crab legs, no scallops or clam strips!

Notice Jesus' adjective for these bad/unclean fish—worthless.

The Greek term is *saprós* which paints the picture of something unwholesome, harmful and useless.

KEYPOINT 3:

Worthless fish offer no value.

Think back to last week and *The Parable of Pearl*.

In that parable, the pearl represents the church, and Jesus taught us that His church is a priceless pearl.

So we have a comparison to what is priceless and what is worthless.

Matthew 13:49— *So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the evil people from the righteous,*

Matthew 13:50— *and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

This parable is the only one so far where Jesus immediately interprets its meaning for us.

Jesus moves from a parable to a predetermined reality.

Matthew 13:49— *So it will be* at the end of the age.

Jesus is saying—"this is how it will be," or "It will be this way."

Jesus is emphatic, specific, direct, and conclusive.

We don't have to guess how things will be when we die or when it's time for judgment.

Jesus tells us clearly and repeatedly what will happen at the End of the Age with certainty.

Matthew 13:49(a)— *The angels will go out,*

We learned a little about angels in *The Parable of the Weeds*.

Angels are mentioned over 50 times in the Gospels alone.

Angels have a significant role to play during the End of Age.

Matthew 13:49(b)— *separate the evil people from the righteous,*

The Parable of the Weeds revealed the coexistence of Believers and unbelievers living today in what we call the "Church Age."

God's grace permits unbelief and wickedness to live side by side with faith and righteousness.

However, everything has a deadline—including salvation.

Jesus no longer refers to the Church Age in verse 49 but to the End of The Age.

The End of the Age is now a time of separation.

Therefore, angels will usher Believers into paradise when they die—called Heaven

Angels will also escort unbelievers to their everlasting doom—called Hell.

In other words, each one of us will be examined and judged when we die.

Matthew 16:27—*For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each according to what he has done.*

God's judgment then determines where we will spend eternity.

Jesus links His parable to judgment day in His explanation.

The reality of judgment is one of the many reasons Jesus explained this parable directly after He taught it.

In other words, just as the fisherman examined each fish when it was pulled out of the net—there were only two choices.

Clean and unclean.

The same holds true for people on judgment day.

2 Chronicles 16:9—For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are wholeheartedly devoted to him.

Proverbs 15:3—The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, observing the wicked and the good.

Proverbs 15:11—Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord—how much more, human hearts.

In Hebrew, *sheol* means “the place of the dead.”

In Hebrew, the name “Abaddon” means “place of destruction.”

Luke 8:17—For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known and brought to light.

A person either believes that Jesus is Lord or he doesn't.

A person is either covered by Christ's grace and blood or he's not.

A person is either forgiven or unforgiven.

Keep in mind that good people don't go to Heaven. Why?

Because there is no one who has ever lived, apart from the Lord Jesus, who is good. (Rom. 3:12)

So, good people don't go to Heaven—they can't get into Heaven.

Only forgiven sinners do.

Unforgiven sinners go to a very real place called Hell.

How do we know?

Matthew 13:49— So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the evil people from the righteous,

Matthew 13:50— and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Verse fifty may sound like deja vu.

In Jesus' interpretation of *The Parable of the Weeds*...

Matthew 13:42—They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In today's *Parable of the Net*...

Matthew 13:50— throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *people, not fish*

The time is coming when Jesus' toleration of sin ends and His judgment begins.

KEYPOINT 4:

Be careful of taking God's grace for granted.

We need to repent of this.

Every breath we take is a grace gift from God.

The clothes we wear, the food in the fridge, the health that we have—all grace gifts from God.

But there is no bigger grace gift than God's patience with us regarding our unforgiven sin.

Judgment day is coming.

The first phase of judgment will be a separation.

God will separate the good from the bad, the wicked from the righteous.

Just as Jesus says in His parables—separating the weeds from among the wheat—the good fish from the bad fish.

I pray that you to reflect on the clarity in which Jesus teaches today.

Let's go back to the beginning...

Matthew 13:47—the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. — world

In other words, this net is so large that people can move within this net with ease.

It's almost as if we're forever free, but the reality is that we're still in the net.

Now, this net may graze/bumpt us from time to time.

We may hear the Gospel which touches us and offends us.

We may have a tragic event in our lives that gets our attention and startles us.

When these things happen, we usually have two choices.

First, do we swim away from the net and back into the middle where we think it's safe?

Second, Or do we reflect and ponder our lives in full view of eternity?

In other words, have we done business with God regarding our sin?

If we haven't, we swim away and think we've escaped the reality of God's truth.

Or we think we escaped death— not realizing that we are entirely surrounded within God's sovereign plan.

The reality is that the invisible net of God's judgment invades every human being — just like the dragnet seizes every fish.

In other words, the death rate holds steady at 100%.

Your last breath here, will be your first breath in front of the Lord Jesus. Two Options:

1. Jesus as Lord and Savior.
2. Jesus as judge.

And when Jesus judges someone as guilty...He tells us exactly what will happen.

Matthew 13:50— throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

A **blazing furnace** simply translates to fire. (Fiery furnace).

Why does Jesus repeat Himself word for word from *The Parable of the Weeds*?

Answer: Because this eternal truth bears repeating.

Jesus spoke more on the subject of Hell than anyone else in Scripture.

Time and time again, Jesus warns us about the horrors of Hell— and commands us to repent.

Notice that Jesus never pleads or begs—He commands.

Matthew 4:17—“Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

And when people don't repent, it grieves Him deeply.

How do we know? God tells us by speaking through the prophet Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 18:23—“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?”
“Instead, don't I take pleasure when he turns from his ways and lives?”

Many of us are familiar with the saying, “Those who don't remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”

Jesus reminds us of the past in Matthew 24...

Matthew 24:38(a)—For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark.

On that day, everything changed.

Before that day, people mocked Noah as he preached for them to repent.

Matthew 24:39— They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be.

We could say it this way...

For in those days before the second coming, they were eating at Randalls, Bocce's, and Colt Grille...

For in those days before the second coming, they were drinking at some of the Verde Valley's finest wineries...

For in those days before the second coming, Cottonwood was building more homes and hotels and RV parks until The Rapture came.

Jesus' second coming will be fast and swift.

The second coming of Jesus Christ has different phases to it, but be assured that all of us, at some phase will be swept away. *—Just like the parable says.*

Back to our Gospel passage...

Matthew 13:50—*throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

We can not fathom how terrifying this verse truly is.

Jesus doesn't only reference Hell in the Gospels, He describes Hell in great detail.

Jesus says Hell is:

- Eternal—Nothing will be so horrible about Hell as its endlessness. (Luke 16:23),
- Unquenchable fire—focusing on Hell's permanence. (Mark 9:43),
- Total darkness—there is no more hope. (Matt. 25:30),
- Where the worm does not die—eternal torment (Mark 9:48),
- No return—the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness is over. (Luke 16:19–31).

The human mind cannot begin to conceive of the eternal horror that is in Hell.

Make no doubt about it; Hell is a very real place—a place of constant judgment, torment, misery, and pain.

Please also know that God's presence is in Hell—in the form of His righteous wrath on sin.

KEYPOINT 5:

The blazing/fiery furnace of hell doesn't destroy—it only inflicts and administers God's holy wrath.

It's hard to comprehend this kind of fire because we see fire destroy everything in its path—fire burns everything to ashes.

But not so in Hell.

We know the fires of Hell don't destroy because...

Matthew 13:50—where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

If the blazing furnace totally consumes, there wouldn't continue to be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *for eternity.*

Those who weep thought they were Christians.

Those who gnash their teeth in anger hate God for his holiness, goodness, and sovereignty.

What's the main point of this parable?

KEYPOINT 6:

The Parable of the Net describes the absolute certainty of the coming judgment.

Scripture teaches that the judgment of Hell will be experienced in varying degrees.

For everyone in Hell the suffering will be intense and permanent, but some will experience greater torment than others.

For example, those who lived in the OT times will receive a lesser judgment than those of us who live in the NT times.

Why? Because those living in the NT times know more about God's grace and forgiveness through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Those who have heard the Gospel and willfully reject it—essentially trample on the sacrifice that Christ made—thus receiving a much greater punishment.

Matthew 11:21—*Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes long ago.*

Matthew 11:22—*But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.*

Matthew 11:23—*And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades. (Why?) For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today.*

Matthew 11:24—*But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."*

And on the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for the pagan cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than for the Jewish cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. Why?

The Jewish cities not only had the promise of the OT but also the opportunity to see and hear the Son of God in person and to witness His miracles (Matt. 11:22–23).

PREACH:

As a pastor and Bible teacher, I'm glad that Jesus taught as much as He did on the subject of Hell rather than leaving it for his ministers to guess.

How could we say that Hell is so terrible that it can only be explained adequately by picturing a fire that never ends and yet never totally consumes.

How could we say that it will produce an eternal "weeping and gnashing of teeth"?

No pastor, minister, or priest would dare predict that fate for another human being.

Yet, that's exactly what Jesus does.

Jesus tells us these things because...

KEYPOINT 7:

Hell is a part of God's creation.

It's a part of Genesis 1.

Genesis 1:1—*In the beginning, God created...*

And since God created all things, all things are His.

Which means people are accountable to Him.

Accountability is the primary reason people claim to be atheist or agnostic—they simply refuse to have anyone telling them what to do or how to live.

God created and designed Hell— not out of desire, but necessity.

In this parable, Jesus addresses the one thing that really matters.

God's invitation of grace.

For those of you who don't believe—the invitation is before you.

Contrary to what the prosperity preachers proclaim, God doesn't beg—^{we're} ~~you're~~ not that special.

Here's the invite:

Romans 10:9—If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10— One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

These are God's rules for entrance into Heaven.

Many people, think to themselves, "So what, I don't believe that."

The reality of this parable is that it doesn't matter what they believe, it only matters what God says.

There is only one truth—which is that all truth comes from God alone.

Don't harden your heart if the Lord is opening your eyes to see the Good News of the Gospel.

For us to understand the Good News, we must first understand the bad.

You have two enemies that act like friends—the world and the devil.

And they both have told you that now is the time to live it up— that there will always be time for repentance or religion or whatever at a much later date.

Countless millions of people have believed that lie.

Do business with God today because there is a reality to your sin.

There are two realities:

1. Sin has already been paid for through Christ.

2. Sin will be paid for by you.



That's the reality of God's Kingdom.

For those of you who do believe—this parable points us to the Great Commission.

We are reminded to share Jesus day by day.

Jesus told some disciples that they would fish for men.

Our evangelism, our preaching of the Gospel, and our sharing Jesus in the Verde Valley is like trawling with a net that will catch as many people as possible.

We, too, are called to be fishers of men.

This means that we must go where the fish are.

ABC

Now, we will continue to train and teach you how to fish for people—but its your choice to go where the fish are.



PRAYER

LORD'S SUPPER



BENEDICTION

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

(Romans 11:33/36)

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