

The Parable of the Net - Evangelism

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Matthew 13:47-50

Introduction -

Saving Grace and Human Responsibility. 7 Parables, 1 Introduction + 3 Saving Grace + 3 Human Responsibility.

Key Idea/Application: Evangelism!

1. What's the Net?

- a. Illustration: Me on the Beach.
- b. Hard work.
- c. Many people's jobs. (You don't need to be a Pastor to do it!)

2. Righteousness vs Unrighteousness.

- a. Illustration: The net was wide.
- b. Preach to everyone.
- c. The Parable of the Treasures teaches us the 1st Beatitude.

3. Eternal Consequences.

- a. Housekeeping in our Churches.
- b. Fire, Weeping, Gnashing of Teeth.

Conclusion -

- a. What's the worst form of hate?
- b. We conclude with the very first Parable in mind.

This is the Last Parable here in Matthew. 7 Parables in total (Perfection, God's number) and just like a book, he structured everything with Chapters: 1st Parable is the *Introduction*, followed by 3 Parables (2 Parables with no interpretation, 1 Parable with *Interpretation*); after that, 3 more Parables (2 Parables with no interpretation, 1 Parable with *Interpretation*).

The first set of Parables talked about God's Saving Grace (the seeds). The second set of Parables talked about Human Responsibility (Sell everything, Fishermen/Nets). *The interpretations function as the beginning and ending of chapters

In 7 Parables (Perfection, Completeness): God presents his Saving Grace & Human Responsibility in responding to the Gospel. Thus, the Doctrines of the Bible are *never conflicting*, as the Bible portrays both sides of the picture.

You may notice that the Parable of the Net is similar to the Parable of the Wheat/Weed; which makes us wonder "why would Jesus 'repeat himself' with another Parable..." The difference, however, is in the *application*. The Parable of the Weeds focuses on the fact that both Righteousness and Unrighteousness co-exist. It also aims to answer our existential question "Where does Evil come from?" It comes from the Devil - The focus was God's deeds vs the Devil's deeds. Now, the Parable of the Net takes all those elements, and adds to it the *Human Responsibility* of Preaching the Gospel to the lost people. That's why the 2 Parables are so similar and yet so different.

On top of that, if we think about our Last week's Sermon (the Treasures), it adds to our Parable of the Net. Because the Gospel is a Treasure of great value, and since the Gospel has Eternal blessedness for the ones who are saved by it, that should awaken in us a love for the lost and eagerness to Evangelism.

Without further ado, let us jump into today's text:

Matthew 13:47-50 *"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

The main application of this Parable is Evangelism, why?

1. The answer is at the end of the Parable: The Blazing Furnace, weeping, & Gnashing of teeth. Should people's lives be confined just to their existence (30 - 70 years on Earth), there wouldn't be such an urgency for the Gospel to be preached to

them! But since there is Eternity at Stake, there is an urgency for us to preach the Gospel. Only the Gospel of Jesus has the power to save people's lives. Not good works, nor another Religion, nor money... (Romans 10:17)

May I spend a *brief* paragraph in the "Doctrine" of Hell and Eternal condemnation. The idea of Fire, Weeping, and Gnashing of Teeth respectively: (i) We understand that Fire is a symbol of "purification" - "testing" - "refining." Fire makes gold more pure and makes the grass disappear... When Jesus "walked through the fire (the cross) he came out of it!" For those who have rejected the Gospel, when fire puts their lives to the test, they are consumed - they can't come out of it! (ii) Weeping = the pain, torment, desperation, and a feeling of crossing the line of the "point of no return!" (iii) Gnashing of teeth does not stand for pain! It does stand for wrath! Jesus is making it clear, those who are thrown to the Lake of Fire are the ones who hate God.

Hence, that's the reason why we should have an urgency to preach the Gospel!

2. What's the Net?

The Net is the Preaching of the Gospel. It is important to emphasize that this is *hard work*! I remember when I was a kid the fishermen by the beach would throw the net into the sea, and when it was time to pull the net to the shore, it took ALL of us to pull the net (Yes, including me! A kid, haha. Anyone who was by the beach near the workers were welcome to help out!).

I know, I know... We tend to think preaching the Gospel is the Pastor's or Evangelist's job... But all of us, (think about my fellow fishermen back in Brazil) are called to join the task of Preaching the Gospel.

It is also important to notice that the Preaching of the Gospel is not necessarily "restricted" to the Sermon! We have seen an awakening in God's people as they preach the Gospel with the Arts: Movies, Theatre Play, Songs, Choir, a Picture, Novels (A.K.A: C.S. Lewis - Narnia). We serve a Creative God! "Every truth it's God's truth!" As the Bible says, "Let us not get weary by doing what's good!" Because sharing Jesus with the Lost ones is the best good thing we could EVER do to people!

3. Righteousness vs Unrighteousness

Lastly, just to clarify, who are the good fish and who are the bad fish?

For context of the Parable: The net is wide and big, therefore it picks up every kind of thing. The idea here is that we preach to everyone/everywhere on every occasion. Application: PREACH TO EVERYONE!

Who are the righteous and who are not: The ones who believe in Jesus or not! Referring to our former Parable, we learned that the Treasure of great value cannot be bought, because it has Eternal Value and its currency is Heavenly (The Son of God, is the “currency”). Therefore, we should not read the words “good fish” & “bad fish” for the good things people do or don’t; the correct way of understanding “good fish” & “bad fish” relies on the 1st beatitude Jesus preached on the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the *poor* in Spirit, for theirs the Kingdom of Heaven...” the Parables of the Treasure taught us that we can’t buy Salvation therefore we “Sell everything.” We come to Jesus with empty hands! Righteousness is not about what I do, but it is about what Jesus has done! Righteous people are the ones who confess their poverty and (with repented hearts) believe that only Jesus can make them Righteous!

Illustration: We come to Jesus with empty hands... We are on our death bed, and the Doctor Jesus comes with the medicine to give us, all we need to do: *Just* stretch our empty hands and receive it!

Key ideas:

1. It is interesting the Parallel made between this parable and the parable of the weeds. But the emphasis is different: The Parable of the Weed urges us “not to do anything” because time will test/prove who is weed and who is wheat; Here the urgency is on the doing (Evangelism)!!
2. The Parable of the Mustard Seed did talk about Evangelism before - “The small seed grows big until it becomes a tree and the birds lodge onto it,” (do you remember it?) Why would Jesus repeat Evangelism once more? The Mustard seed focuses on the *desire* to preach the Gospel... “*Saved people, want others to be saved as well!*” Now, Jesus focuses on the reality that Evangelism is *hard work*! Being honest: We need more than just a desire for Evangelism... It is not “natural” to evangelize others; it is uncomfortable; it puts us on the spot...
3. I wonder why Jesus finished the 7 Parables section here, with Evangelism & Eternity as the last one... It reminds me that’s the way he Finished Matthew’s Gospel as well: The Great Commission (Matthew 28).

