

Sunday, February 21, 2021 am

TEACHINGS OF Jesus (37)
Parables of Jesus (6)
The Parable of the Dragnet
Matthew 13:47-50

As we continue examining the parables of Jesus, we come to another parable recorded in Matthew 13. This is the 7th parable in this chapter. Thus far we have noted why Jesus taught in parables, the parable of the sower, parable of wheat and tares, parables of mustard seed and leaven, parables of hidden treasure and pearl of great price. We now come this 7th parable – called the parable of the dragnet.

I. The Parable Described

- a. Again, the kingdom is like – we continue to learn about things associated with the kingdom in this and so many parables.
- b. The dragnet – was described as a large net that had anchors on the bottom and flotation devices on top. It would be taken out into the water a ways, and dropped, sometimes by more than one boat. The dragnet would then be pulled by the boats involved together or pulled in from the shore.
- c. The catch would consist of all different types of fish. Just remember that the Jews were given instructions about clean and unclean animals. In a large catch using this method, likely both good and bad (unclean or otherwise) would be dragged in together.
- d. In the parable, the good fish were gathered into baskets (likely for market or consumption), and the bad were thrown away (not thrown back into the water).

II. The parable explained

- a. First notice, that as Jesus taught this, most people would be at least partially familiar with the methods of fishing they engaged in, especially consider how Jesus did much of His teaching around the sea of Galilee. Remember the setting of these parables – Jesus was by the sea and taught from a boat while the people stood on the seashore.
- b. This is another parable where Jesus gives us application.
- c. ***So it will be at the end of the age*** (49) - his is clearly a parable about judgment.
- d. ***Angels will be sent forth*** – recall that earlier we addressed the parable of the wheat and tares, also about judgment and some tie these two parables together (like the mustard seed and leaven OR treasure and pearl). And there is some merit in this as we shall see. BOTH parables address angels (vs. 41, 49) which we noted are involved in the judgment scene of God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
- e. ***The wicked will be separated from the just*** – this is another similarity between the parable of wheat and tares and this one. BUT here, one observation made about this parable is how it COULD apply to those WITHIN the kingdom.
Recall how in the parable of the wheat and tares, *we noted that the field is the world* – for so we are told. Thus, we find the godly and ungodly living together in the world. *HERE, that clarification is not made.* We do find here the angels are doing the separating (like in the above parable).
BUT a difference to consider is, as is the case with this type of fishing, there is NO way to distinguish the good from the bad UNTIL the net is drawn to shore.
Furthermore, consider in the text:
 - i. We read in vs. 49 that the wicked would be separated from ***among*** the just. That word among means they are in the midst of. Now while that could apply to the righteous among

- the wicked in the world, it could also rightly apply to ungodly people being in the gathering of the godly (more on this in our application.
- ii. Consider that the kingdom of heaven was **THE DRAGNET**, which was cast INTO THE SEA. In the parable of wheat and tares, the whole of the kingdom was the field, which was described as the world. Here those in the net were a subgroup of the sea. Consider what Jesus said in calling Peter and the other fishermen – Matthew 4:19, “*I will make you fishers of men.*” In the parallel and more detailed account of this, Luke 5:10 Jesus said, “*From now on you will catch men.*” Those they would “catch” would be drawn out of the world (or sea).
 - f. ***The wicked are cast into the furnace of fire*** – they are condemned and destroyed. This is one of many places Jesus describes the destiny of the wicked. More in a moment.

III. Applications

- a. There is a day of judgment coming. I am convinced that ultimately this parable is about the end of time, when the Lord will return.
In dealing with the wheat and tares, we briefly alluded to this.
And it is worthy of continually being reminded that there is a day of coming.
- b. Our judgments are not perfect – it is possible that “in the kingdom “(church) we have those who do not genuinely belong there because of corrupt and possibly hidden behavior. And we may NOT know it.
 - i. 2 Timothy 2:20-22 – in a great house there are vessels of honor and dishonor.
 - ii. In our study of churches in times past, we have noted numerous letters where there were problems. Within congregations there were brethren who had serious problems they needed to change – 1 Corinthians 5 describes a man guilty of adultery, and the rest of that letter was filled with problems. Paul began the letter in 1 Corinthians 1:10 with a call for unity. Now while these problems were manifest outwardly, such was and is not always the case.
 - iii. I think of the 7 churches of Asia – a great study of the landscape of congregations. There were congregations that were mostly good, but had some within who were not (Ephesus – Rev. 2:1-7; Pergamos – Rev. 2:12-17, Thyatira – Rev. 2:18-29). Others were significantly bad, but with a few godly within. Sardis – Rev. 3:1-6 – they even had a few godly in their midst, & Laodicea – Rev. 3:14-22 – of which nothing good was said). The point is that members within a congregation are accepted with judgment, but because we are human we can be mistaken.
Consider the parable of the sower – both the stony and thorny grounds were groups that, at least for awhile, were in the kingdom. There’s no indication the thorny soiled heart ever left.
 - iv. But in that day, they WILL be revealed. You MAY get away with hypocrisy and corruption with men, but NOT with God. He will even judge the secrets of men. Romans 2:16, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.
Revelation 20:12 speaks of the dead standing before God and being judged by their works, BASED upon books that were opened.
1 Corinthians 4:5, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.*
1 Timothy 5:24, *Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.*
 - v. NOTE: If this be the case, this parable does not teach the dismissal of congregational discipline either, as we have previously noted

- c. Being part of a congregation is not an automatic ticket to heaven – while being part of the Lord’s church is crucial (we have emphasized this before), even if you find the true church, it not an automatic ticket to heaven. You STILL have be a faithful Christian in God’s eyes. Ultimately, our judgment is going to be individual – Romans 14:10-12. And while our part in the church will play a part in this (Ephesians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27, etc.), your ultimate judgment in this area will depend on your FAITHFULNESS in this and everything else. I again appeal to the 7 churches of Asia in Revelation 2 & 3. Several times individuals who stood out from the rest, both for good and evil, were addressed and either commended or condemned and told to repent or else. NO passage of scripture is found, that I know of, that indicates your eternal destiny is tied to the faithfulness of that church (again do NOT misunderstand my point – the local church IS IMPORTANT, and I believe essential in your life as a Christian).
- d. There is a place of destructive punishment described for the ungodly –
- i. We are again reminded, by our Lord, that there is a place reserved for the wicked. And it is described in the most horrific of terms.
 - ii. Jesus used the term **Gehenna** (usually translated hell) 11 of the 12 times it is found in the NT (James 3:6 being the only other place). It was a place any Jew would have related to as it described the defiled garbage dump of Jerusalem whose past was sorely infamous. Matthew 10:28, Jesus warned, *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* He described it in such severe terms that He said it is better to pluck out your eye or cut off your hand to keep from sinning than to be cast into that place. (Matthew 5:3, 18:9, etc.)
 - iii. Here Jesus described it as “the furnace of fire” – a place that consumes and destroys.
 - iv. Here Jesus described it as a place where “there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” – this is the gritting of teeth because of pain. The point is that it will NOT be pleasant.
 - v. Matthew 25:41, 46 describe it as an eternal place – an “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” It will be a place of regrets for all of eternity.
 - vi. It is a place that NO ONE, if he understood it, would want to end up. We live in a time where this place is profanely referenced, and many even boast about going there. Friends they do NOT understand its severity.
 - vii. Yet, Jesus throughout His preaching and teaching continually warned about this place and who would be there.

And thus, we can see another parable about judgment. It was a serious subject and one that is fundamental to understand. Because there is going to be a judgment WITH ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES, we need to remind ourselves about this regularly. IT is NOT a pleasant subject, but far to many are destined to torments. BUT the subject of God’s judgment does not have to be terrifying to you. If you but surrender to Him by obeying His gospel, you can live with a hope of heaven, the place of eternal rest and goodness. So what about you, are you ready for that day? Think about it!