

THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

Matthew 13: 47-50

by

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A dragnet was commonly used by commercial fisherman in Jesus' day; therefore it was very familiar to His disciples, of whom many were also fishermen. In Mark's Gospel, Chapter one, Verse 16, we read: "And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen." In Mark 1:19 we read: "When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets." When Jesus first encountered four of His disciples they were either casting or mending nets. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus' first words to men who would become His disciples were: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17).

(Luke 5:1-2) In order to effectively use a dragnet, it required two boats and the united effort of half-dozen men or more. The disciples understood every nuance of The Parable of the Dragnet. While some rowed the boat, others cast or pulled in the net; still others would beat the waters to drive the fish into the net. Two boats went out from the shore, forming a semicircle with the net drawing it together to catch the fish and gather them into the boats. This net was about 2 meters in height and up to 100 meters in length. Corks held up the top of the net, while the bottom was weighted down. The net drew in all kinds of fish—different sizes, different colors, different types.

According to Jewish dietary laws, some types of fish were unclean (Leviticus 11:10). Fish without fins or scales could not be eaten and had to be thrown back into the water. The small fish were also released. Only fish that were marketable were kept.

Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind" (Mt. 13:47). Just as a dragnet was absolutely essential to a successful commercial fishing endeavor/enterprise, the Word of the kingdom is absolutely essential to the fishing-for-men enterprise. Jesus explained the kingdom of God in depth and detail to His disciples, because in effect, the kingdom message would be their dragnet. Jesus was teaching them: Don't go fishing for men without your dragnet. Boats don't catch fish, dragnets catch fish. You could actually use a dragnet from the shore and catch fish. Therefore, the dragnet was more important than the boat. The dragnet represents the visions of the kingdom, the word of the kingdom, the influence of the kingdom, the value and importance of the kingdom. The dragnet represents the application or effect of the Gospel. The most important piece of fishing equipment was the dragnet. You did not need bait if you had a dragnet.

- I. Notice that the dragnet had to be cast into the sea. Unless the Word of the kingdom is cast into the world, we cannot expect to catch a harvest of fish. Notice that this is how Jesus approached spreading His kingdom message (Mark 1:14-15). The dragnet had to be cast into the sea. The Word of the kingdom must be preached to every creature. Everybody ought to know who Jesus is. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the Great I AM!

The Nation of Islam has a “Saviors Day” every year, and they celebrate W.D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad as Saviors. Jamie Foxx says that he was joking when he referenced President Obama as “our Lord and Savior,” but the Ten Commandments warn us against these types of jokes.

We must cast the net into the sea, because one of these days the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

- II. Notice that the dragnet gathered fish of every kind. One of the dangers of interpreting parables is to attempt to make every line meaningful. But could it be that when Jesus told His disciples that you would pull in fish of every kind, He was making it clear that the kingdom of heaven would be comprised of Jews and Gentiles, and every ethnic group under the sun. There will be diversity in the kingdom. Every church should reflect the racial and socio-economic demographics of her community. (Revelations 7:9)
- III. Notice that the net was full (Matthew 13:48). Jesus wants His Church to keep casting the dragnet until it is full. He said “go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come that my house may be full.” It was filled with all types of fish.
- IV. Notice that they drew to the shore (Matthew 13:48b). The kingdom is coming to the close of an age. The kingdom of heaven will one day cease being and there will only be the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven is comprised of a “mixed multitude.” The Kingdom of God will only be comprised of the sons of the kingdom; The Wheat and not the Tare.
- V. Notice that just as in commercial fishing you have to separate the good fish from the bad, in the kingdom of heaven, the angels will separate “the wicked from among the just” (Mt. 13:49).
- VI. Notice the eternal punishment for the wicked (Matthew 13:50). If God is a righteous and just God, evil must be punished. Javon Belcher (Kansas Chief player), Jerry Brown (Dallas Cowboy player), Jerry Sandusky, child abusers and molesters must be punished. Sex traffickers must be punished. Dope pushers must be punished must be punished. Priests and pastors who have taken advantage of children must be punished. One day God will separate the wheat from the tare, the good fish from the bad fish. “One of these days, the wicked shall cease from troubling and the weary, shall be at rest. And all the saints of the ages are going to sit at His feet and be blessed.” “Some glad morning when this life is over, I’ll fly away.”