



The Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:47-50)

Have you ever asked yourself the question, “What does God fish for?” The answer might affect what you wake up searching for each day. In a parable about God’s net, Jesus addressed this question (Matthew 13:47-50).

First, God fishes for all (Matthew 13:47). In His parable, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like a net used to catch fish. The Greek word He used was *sagene* describing a dragnet. The imagery was important. The dragnet included floats at the top and weights at the bottom with each corner tied together with its counterpart at the ends. The result was that *all* of the fish swimming in the area would be caught in the net.

God’s dragnet reaches those who have floated to the top of the sea as well as those who have sunk to rock bottom. No one is outside the reach of God’s net (Isaiah 59:1; cf. Romans 1:16-17). His net is one of love and kindness that catches all (Romans 8:38-39) and leads them to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Street Smarts for the Restoration Road

Whether you have swum to the top of your moral and vocational game, or you find yourself sunk at rock bottom, God’s net will find you. When it does, He will be looking for something, or someone.

Second, God fishes for Christ in us (Matthew 13:48a). In Jesus’ parable, He said that the fish caught in the net are separated into two groups: the good and the bad. Interestingly, the determination of which group each fish is tossed is not predicated on the fish itself, but rather the life within the fish. The Apostle Paul said that each one of us will be judged as good or bad by what he has done with Christ, responding with either a humble heart of full surrender or a proud heart of rejection (Romans 2:5-6, 16).

Two kinds of prideful rejection swim in the sea of life, one at the top and one at the rock bottom of God’s dragnet. Those who trust in their own goodness float to the top, and those who trust in their own badness sink to the bottom. The former tend to be religious, the latter irreligious. Either way, they will be tossed out as bad if they did not humble their hearts in full surrender to Christ, receiving His heart and life of relational righteousness. It is Christ in us that deems us as good fish (Colossians 1:27).

Street Smarts for the Restoration Road

Where are you swimming in God’s dragnet? Are you at the top or at rock bottom? How have you responded to Christ, really?

Third, God fishes for the unique expression of God’s kingdom in us (Matthew 13:48b-50). In the parable, the fishermen keep the good fish for the service they had designed, and they discard the bad. Jesus said that this was a picture of judgment day when the angels separate the wicked from the righteous (Matthew 13:50). The righteous—those in Christ—continue in their unique expression of God’s kingdom in them. The wicked—those outside Christ—are tossed into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, symbols of agony, sadness, and regret (cf. Romans 2:7-11). The agony, sadness, and regret stem from the lost opportunity to surrender to Christ, forever removed from the seas uniquely designed for them to fish for men.



Street Smarts for the Restoration Road

What is God's unique expression of His kingdom in you? What sea has He uniquely designed for you to fish for men—making disciples of Christ? The key to the answer lies in what energizes you, what makes you cry, and what you would do regardless of the outcome.

Conclusion

God fishes for all men in order to find Christ in them. A true disciple of Christ is one who makes other disciples. If we are in Christ, then we will fish for men who will fish for men...who will fish for men (Matthew 4:19-20).