

Lesson 256

The Parables of the Dragnet and Householder



Story Elements

- **Text:** Matthew 13:47-53
- **Setting:** circa AD 28 in Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, and parable characters
- **Plot:** Jesus gives another parable that illustrates the mixed nature of the Kingdom of Heaven in this world, and then emphasizes the need for his disciples to understand and share the truth.
- **Key word(s):** “Have you _____ all these things?” (v 51) This is a fitting question to close this chapter of parables.
- **Climax:** **Matthew 13:51** *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?* In this verse, Jesus shows that the parables are more than quaint stories – they are vital truths that must be understood, and if they are understood, they must be shared with others.

The Dragnet

1. (v 47) Jesus uses a familiar scene from the lives of fishermen. A dragnet was cast into the water and drawn through it, indiscriminately gathering fish of various kinds.
 - (a) In the parable, the net represents the gathering associated with the kingdom of heaven. People come under the influence of the gospel and become part of the _____ community that professes to follow Christ.
 - (b) The visible church includes people who truly believe and people who merely profess faith. Some have been transformed by God's grace; others have an outward connection to Christianity without _____ saving faith.

APPLICATION➔ J. C. Ryle said, “Let us learn from this parable, that all congregations of professed Christians ought to be regarded as *mixed bodies*. They are all assemblies containing, ‘good fish and bad,’ converted and unconverted, children of God and children of the world...”¹

2. (v 48) The fishermen did not sort the catch while the net was gathering it. They brought the net ashore and then separated the fish. This pictures the distinction that will be revealed at the end of the age. Although the righteous and the wicked may live alongside one another in this world and appear together within the visible church, they will not share the same _____ destiny.

APPLICATION➔ Spurgeon warned that a church’s success “may not be so great as it seems; for the contents of the net are varied; it *gathered of every kind*. So long as it is in the water, it contains *good* and *bad* of necessity.”²

3. (vv 49-50) Jesus explained the meaning of the parable clearly: The end of the world, or the end of the age, will bring a decisive separation between the wicked and the righteous. Three truths stand out:
 - (a) Judgment is _____ - Jesus does not present the final judgment as a possibility. He says, “So shall it be.” The same Lord who came the first time to save sinners will return as the appointed Judge of all.
 - (b) Judgment is _____ - No one will escape God's knowledge or authority. People may deceive others, conceal their sins, or maintain a religious appearance, **but nothing is hidden from God.**

¹ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, VOL I, Matthew, Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 153.

² Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 107.

- (c) Judgment is _____ - The separation will not be temporary. There will be no opportunity to reverse God's verdict after the judgment.
- (d) Judgment is _____ - Jesus ends the parable with a solemn warning. The furnace of fire and the expressions "wailing and gnashing of teeth" describe the terrible punishment awaiting the wicked in final judgment.

The Householder

4. Jesus concludes this series of parables by asking His disciples whether they understand what He has taught. He then describes the _____ of someone who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven.
5. (v 51) **The Need for Understanding** – Earlier in the chapter, Jesus explained that the disciples had been given the privilege of understanding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:10-17). Now He asks whether they have understood the things He has taught them. The question is significant because hearing God's Word and understanding God's Word are not necessarily the same thing.
 - (a) **Hearing** means _____ the words.
 - (b) **Understanding** means grasping their _____ and significance.
 - (c) **Applying** means responding to those truths in faith and _____.
6. (v 52) **The Responsibility of Instruction** – Jesus describes a person who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven as a householder who brings valuable things out of his storehouse.
 - (a) In Jewish culture, scribes were often responsible for studying, interpreting, and teaching God's law. But Jesus is describing a different kind of scribe: one who has been instructed in the kingdom of _____.
 - (b) The scribes (instructors) of the kingdom of heaven are like a householder (master of a household). A householder in the ancient world was responsible for managing the household and its resources. He would maintain a store of provisions and other valuable goods, bringing them out when needed. Jesus puts these **treasures** into two categories:
 - i. Old treasures – these are truths already revealed in the Old Testament.
 - ii. New treasures – these are truths Jesus reveals through the Gospels and apostolic writings.

APPLICATION➡ Spurgeon exhorts: “What we have received into our *treasure* we must *bring forth*. If the Lord has instructed in the kingdom, it is for the sake of others.”³

[illegible]

Answer Key: key word(s) “understood” • 1. a) visible; b) genuine • 2. final • 3. a) certain; b) comprehensive; c) final; d) severe • 4. responsibility • 5. a) receiving; b) meaning; c) obedience • 6. a) heaven

³ Spurgeon, 108.