

Final Kingdom: The Net Parable

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Matthew 13:47-50

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Reflection & Discussion

Jesus tells a story of a dragnet and its contents

Read and discuss Matthew 13:47-50 (NIV)

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

*What does this story tell us about the Kingdom of God?

*What can you understand about the net and what it collects? What remains mysterious?

Everything will be swept up under the authority of Jesus

One day it all will be evaluated for what it is and sorted accordingly.

*If evaluation of us is part of the afterlife, what are the criteria Jesus will use for the evaluation?

*Jesus doesn't give any criteria in this story – just 'good' and 'bad'. What do you think his definitions of good and bad, wicked and righteous are?

*What other teachings and parables give us some clarity about what these definitions might be?

Jesus is using these evaluation parables to say, 'what we do in this life matters'

We, who belong to Jesus, will somehow be evaluated in the next life by how our love for God was expressed in loving our neighbor.

Read and discuss Matthew 25:35-40

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

*What does this passage say about God's evaluation?

*How has this been misunderstood by religious people; by you? When was a time you focused on something besides love of others to evaluate your spiritual life?

We are saved by grace – totally

Even so, we are evaluated by God on what we do with our neighbor.

*If you are being honest with yourself, knowing love is the evaluative tool – how are you doing? How is Pulpit Rock doing?

*In what way does our understanding of the permeation of grace in our own lives impact how we love others?

*What is the Spirit prompting you to do with this picture of the Kingdom of God? Is there a step you are spurred to take?

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