

## Kingdom (Part 5) The Kingdom of Heaven is Like

3/9/2025

This morning we will be looking at two more of the parables recorded in Matthew chapter 13. The first is generally known as the parable of the net and the second has been referred to by a number of different names. For this morning I will be referring to it as the parable of the master of the house.

### 1. The Parable of the Net - Matthew 13:47-50

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

### 2. Master of a house - Matthew 13:51-52

*“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”*

Fish and various aspects relating to them are spoken of 75 times in Scripture. In 8 of these occasions the word appears as ‘fishers’ or ‘fisher’s’. And I think most Christians would be reminded of the words of our Lord to His disciples that He would make, or call them to be ‘fishers of men’. This morning I would like to take a closer look at the 8 times in scripture where this word ‘fishers’ and ‘fisher’s’ appear. We will spend some time looking at the context in which this these words appears to try and better understand this parable of the net.

I will list the passage where the word ‘fishers’ appears and then read the passages surrounding it for context -

**Isaiah 19:8** (19:1-8) - *“An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them. And I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will fight, each against another and each against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom; and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out, and I will confound their counsel; and they will inquire of the idols and the sorcerers, and the mediums and the necromancers; and I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard master, and a fierce king will rule over them, declares the Lord God of hosts. And the waters of the sea will be dried up, and the river will be dry and parched and its canals will become foul, and the branches of Egypt’s Nile will diminish and dry up, reeds and rushes will rot away. There will be bare places by the Nile, on the brink of the Nile, and all that is sown by the Nile will be parched, will be driven away, and will be no more. The **fishermen** (fishers) will mourn and lament, all who cast a hook in the Nile; and they will languish who spread nets on the water.”*

The nation Egypt had grown up along the banks of the Nile river. And the people of that nation lived off of the bounty it provided. God would bring judgment upon this nation for their actions.

Notice how part of the description of their downfall is described - The fishers would mourn, the waters dried up and their nets will languish.

**Jeremiah 16:16** (16:1-21) *“The word of the Lord came also unto me, saying, Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place. For thus saith the Lord concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land; They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. For thus saith the Lord, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord, even lovingkindness and mercies. Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them: Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother. Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride. And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God? Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me: Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favor. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many **fishers**, saith the Lord, and they shall **fish** them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things. O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The Lord.”*

It would be Jeremiah the prophet who would be tasked with telling the Israelites the calamities which were about to fall upon them the nation Israel for their rebelling against God and rejecting God’s Word. Jeremiah was to demonstrate to Israel through his own life by not marrying and having children that his lineage would be cut off as their’s would be. And once again notice part of how their downfall would occur - *Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith*

*the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.* The Babylonians would come find them and carry them away.

But also notice the underlined portion of Scripture above. Isn't this also a message of future hope! (Consider Jeremiah 31:31-34 the promise of a new covenant.) And it was also Abraham who came down from the north, and through whom the people of Israel would become a nation.

**Ezekiel 47:10** (47:1-10) *“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of **fish**, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the **fishers** shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their **fish** shall be according to their kinds, as the **fish** of the great sea, exceeding many.”*

Ezekiel would become part of the exile which Jeremiah had prophesied of. And Like Jeremiah Ezekiel was called upon to demonstrate by physical acts the concepts that God was trying to get His people to understand. And like Jeremiah the people of Israel even after they were taken into exile had to be told that they would die for their own sins having refused to return to God. But once again God would tell them through a prophet of a time when the waters would flow from the Throne of God's grace and nets would be spread forth and scoop up fish according to their kinds. (good and bad, Jew and Gentile). This account in Ezekiel is filled with references that we find throughout Scripture where God is offering wonderful things to mankind through His great mercy.

For example consider the opening of Revelation chapter 22 - *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on*

*their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."*

The accounts above from Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of bad times to come. Ezekiel lived in exile during some of those bad times. But Ezekiel also speaks of a time when God would show mercy. Revelation echoes that time of great mercy from God.

Now let us turn to The New Testament and see what it has to say on this subject of fishers. Here we find the word 'fishers' used in two separate accounts. One of these two accounts is recorded in both Matthew and Mark's gospels, while the other is found in John. For the first we will be looking at Matthew's account.

**Matthew 4:18-19** (4:18-22) *"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were **fishers**. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you **fishers** of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."*

Here we have 1/3 of the 12 Jesus would call to be His disciples. Jesus - the Word made flesh, the creator of the universe. Do you suppose they fully knew at this point who they were following? Did they understand the call would come for fishers of men like that spoken of in the prophets?

In Matthew and Mark's account of this calling of the disciples we have 4 of the 5 times the word 'fishers' appear in The New Testament. The 5th time this word appears is in John chapter 21 as follows - *"After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his **fisher's** coat unto him, (for he was naked,) **and did cast himself into the sea."***

Let us consider a few things from this account thus far -

1. What percentage of Jesus' disciples were fishing for fish in this account?
2. Is this the type of fish Jesus had called them to fish for?
3. Did you notice in the term 'fisher's coat' the word 'fisher's' is possessive. The Greek word John uses here is *ependutēs* pronounced ep-en-doo'-tace. This is the only time in Scripture that this word appears and it describes a particular type of outer garment worn by fishermen of that period. Peter still had and wore the outer garment of his previous profession, an earthly fisherman.
4. Might this add to our understanding of Jesus' question to Peter a little later on in this account when Jesus asks Peter - 'Do you love these more than these'? - What are the 'these'?

Number 4 above reminds me of another passage -

Hebrews chapter eleven is known as the chapter of faith. It speaks of those in the past who have had great faith in carrying out the Word of God in their lives. We also recognize that The New Testament was not divided into chapters and verses when it was originally written down. Upon the closing of the accounts of faith recorded in what we call chapter 11 these are the very next words (or beginning of chapter 12 as we know it) - *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us**, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”*

**Easily beset** = the Greek word euperistatos pronounced yoo-per-is'-tat-os = defined as - easily encircling, easily surrounding, easily distracted, thwarting, standing around, that is, (a competitor) thwarting (a racer) in every direction (figuratively of sin in general).

Peter had put on his fisher's coat and surrounded himself with his old way of life. Jesus asks - *lovest thou me more than these??*

Now back to John chapter 21 beginning with verse 8> *“And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.”*

Might we consider this a 'chastening' of Peter by Jesus? Or just reminding Peter the truth of what he had been called to be by God - a fisherman of men not fish!

Immediately following this parable of the net we have been looking at from Matthew's gospel account Jesus asks His disciples a question (Matthew 13:51) - *"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." And he said to them,*

*"Therefore every **scribe** who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."*

(parable of '**Master of a house**' Matthew 13:52)

**Scribe** = Greek 'grammateus' defined as a writer. Grammateus comes from another Greek word 'gramma' = a writing; i.e. a letter, note, epistle, book, scripture. We might say it this way - Every scribe brings out treasure from what is new and what is old - (New Testament/Old Testament). Thus a scribe trained for The Kingdom is like the master of a house - he knows where every treasure in that house is located.

Again do you think those disciples who were called by the lake knew what fishers of men they were to become based on the plan of God spoken of in the Old Testament about fishers? Do you know what God has called you to be from the treasures of His Word?