

Sunday January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016  
Without a Parable  
Part Thirteen

1). Mt 13:47 *"Again, the kingdom of heaven continues like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

a). This is the 7<sup>th</sup> and final parable that the Lord gives in the sequence of parables in Matthew Chapter 13, and it is also the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3 parables that He gives having gone back into the house.

b). And being the 7<sup>th</sup> of 7 we realize that this is the capstone to all that has gone before. Contained in this parable then is the ultimate focus to which all the previous parables have been moving and brings us full circle to where the whole sequence of parables began - Mt 13:1 ¶ *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.*

c). The sea as we know pictures for us the Gentile nations to whom the offer of the kingdom of the heavens is being made following Israel's setting aside as a result of their rejection of this offer - Ac 28:27 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."* 28 *"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"* 29 *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.*

Ac 15:14 *"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.*

This parable then once again deals with the people other than Israel, Gentiles/Christians, who hear the word of the kingdom and the parable describes for us that which will be experienced by Gentiles/Christians as a result of their response to hearing the Kingdom message. That seen in this parable then is the end to which we are all presently moving.

d). The picture of the dragnet cast into the sea has echoes from the Gospel of Luke, echoes that will also help explain the picture itself –  
*Lu 5:5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."*

Something we also see in - *Mt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

And seen again after the Lord's resurrection in - *Joh 21:5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." 11 Simon Peter went up and*

*dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.*

e). The dragnet then, which is the same kind of net that we see being used in our examples from the Gospels, is used to capture fish and if we look at both the verses from Luke and those from John we can see that the catching of fish in these nets does not happen randomly, but by following the Lord's instructions, actions determined by faith, *nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.*

f). So, that which the dragnet typifies is the unifying factor which binds all Christians coming from the Gentile nations together, which can only be the gospel of grace, the good news that the disciples would have to present first to the unsaved in their evangelistic efforts – Eph 2:1 ¶ *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),.....8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. 11 ¶ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

g). And in one sense this can be seen to parallel the picture of the disciples, who became Apostles, casting their nets in the Gospel accounts we have looked at today – Eph 2:19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

Ro 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles,*

1Co 2:2 *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

h). It is then the free gift of eternal life that places each of us within the dragnet.

2). Mt 22:8 *"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.*

a). We might remember from our previous study that these verses from the parable of the wedding guest here in Matthew Chapter 22 deal with exactly the same subject as the dragnet cast into the sea. Going into the highways being synonymous with casting the dragnet into the sea and leaving the house and going to the sea.

b). And here in Matthew Chapter 22 we find 'both bad and good' gathered together which is identical to that seen in the dragnet where the 'fish' gathered there are also 'bad' and 'good' – some of every kind.

c). In Matthew Chapter 22 both the bad and the good are seen in relation to the invitation to the wedding of the son of a certain king – all of which pictures the present work of the Holy Spirit in searching out the Bride for God's Son following each Christian having received the free gift.

d). There is no direct statement made in the parable of the wedding guest as to why those seen in the wedding hall are divided between the bad and the good, but that which brings this division is clearly taught through the wedding guest himself - Mt 22:11 *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.*

e). And as we had seen last time this all has to do with preparedness in readiness for finding ourselves at that which the wedding hall pictures – the Judgment Seat of Christ. The exact same truth that is taught through another familiar parable in Matthew, that of the wise and foolish virgins –  
Mt 25:10 *"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut."*

f). And as we know the foundational type describing what it takes to be prepared is to be found in the Book of Ruth - Ru 3:3 *"Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor;"*

Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

g). And just as with the parable of the wedding guest so there is no direct statement concerning the difference between the bad and the good in the parable of the dragnet either, but this has already been clearly taught within the previous parables - Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom....."*

It is then each individual Christian's response to hearing the word of the kingdom that determines whether, from the Lord's perspective, they are to be seen as bad or good - 2Co 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

h). And from that which we have seen from the previous parables there are 2 interconnected elements to this seen through the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares. From the parable of the sower we had seen 4 distinct groups of Christians. 3 of these groups for various revealed reasons failed to produce fruit with respect to the coming Kingdom and because of this they would have to be placed amongst the 'bad' seen in the parable of the dragnet.

i). That seen with these 4 groups in the sower is presented from a slightly different perspective, although teaching the same truth, in the parable of the talents, a parable that immediately follows the parable of the wise and foolish virgins – Mt 25:14 ¶ *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling*

*to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.*

The 'man' delivering 'his goods' to his servants parallels, 'when anyone hears the word of the kingdom', and we will remember from our study of this parable that it is what each servant does with the talents delivered to him that results in him being a 'good and faithful servant' – Mt 25:20 *"So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'* 21 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

Here then is a parallel with the 4<sup>th</sup> group from the parable of the sower, those on good ground who produce fruit, some 100, some 60, some 30 and the 'good' from the parable of the dragnet.

Or 'a wicked and lazy servant' - Mt 25:24 *"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'*

And here the parallel is with the first 3 groups from the parable of the sower who fail to produce fruit even though they had heard the word of the kingdom, they had been given a talent but hid it in the ground, the 'bad' from the parable of the dragnet. And all of this can then be seen again in the parable of the minas found in Luke Chapter 19.

j). And then as we come to the parable of the wheat and tares we see the work done by the enemy amongst those who are producing fruit in order to stop their fruit production through the introduction of false teaching, teaching that approximates the truth of scripture, but is sufficiently off from that truth to cause those following the false teaching to become unfruitful.

k). And we will remember that the outcome of the work of the tares and their false teaching resulted in an unnatural growth of the church which

promotes a totally corrupted message concerning Christ and His coming Kingdom.

l). The outcome for those who began this leavening process and, by implication, all those who have been swept away within it has been given to us in the Lord's explanation of the wheat and tares parable –

*Mt 13:40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

And it will not escape our notice that the outcome for the tares is identical to that given for the 'bad fish' in the parable of the dragnet thereby making the clear association between the two.

m). And to add one more part to this picture we can go to –

*Mt 7:19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 ¶ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

Those seen here in these verses from Matthew Chapter 7 have clearly not produced 'good fruit' because they have not done 'the will of My Father in heaven', in other words they have followed something other than the truth of scripture, in which the will of the Father is to be found, taking us back to the work of the tares and the leavening process. The experience of those seen here who are told to depart from the Lord is synonymous with the 'tares' and the 'bad' fish being cast into 'the furnace of fire'.

n). For those classified as 'good' however, there is an entirely different outcome. In the parable of the dragnet the 'good' fish are gathered into vessels, a much happier outcome than being thrown away, the gathering into vessels again being synonymous with that seen at the conclusion of the Lord's explanation of the wheat and tares - *Mt 13:43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

This is an altogether more glorious picture.

o). And we would have to say that it is because of the certainty of these 2 outcomes, particularly in the time we find ourselves in at the end of this dispensation, that we find this at the beginning of the Book of Jude – Jude 1:1 ¶ *Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. 3 ¶ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for [strain every muscle in the good contest of] the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

3). If we return to the imagery of the parable of the dragnet we will realize that once we are in the ‘net’, once we have been ‘caught’ by receiving the free gift of eternal life so we are to hear the word of the kingdom and then exert every fiber of our being in the race of the faith which follows, as we have seen in Jude, a race that Paul describes in - 1Co 9:24 ¶ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes [strains every muscle] for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.*

a). And to pick up on the image of a fight - 1Ti 6:11 *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight [strain every muscle in] the good fight [contest] of [the] faith, lay hold on age lasting life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

b). The admonition Paul gives here to Timothy is exactly what he declares he has accomplished himself as he came toward the end of his life – 2Ti 4:7 *I have fought [strained every muscle in] the good fight [contest], I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

c). All of this then pictures for us an on-going struggle within a contest, which inevitably would take us to the spiritual warfare in Ephesians Chapter 6, but if we stay within the imagery of the parable of the dragnet we will

realize that once in the net we are to be engaged in this struggle in anticipation of the day when the net will be full and drawn to shore; as drawn to shore it must be, followed by the separation of the bad and the good.

d). Let's remember this is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the 7 parables, this is the Lord's focus for His Church before His Church ever came into being – this is no small thing - 2Ti 4:8 *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

e). And is it any wonder that our time in the 'net' is pictured as a constant struggle? How could it be anything else? We have our battle with the world, the flesh and the devil witnessed in the parable of the sower and the wheat and tares, in the midst of carefully navigating our way through the darkness of this age via the lamp and the extra supply of oil, whilst maintaining a diet free from leaven.

f). But remember - Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

2Co 1:7 ¶ *And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*

Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

Re 3:11 *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

g). Mt 13:51 *Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings*

*out of his treasure things new and old." 53 ¶ Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.*

h). We will pick this up again next time, if the Lord is willing.