**“Kingdom Parables: Kept or Cast Away?”**

Matt. 13:47-52

**(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 4/21/24)**

 In the parables of Matt. 13, Jesus has been relating what the kingdom of heaven is like for its citizens, and how it will end one day. In this final parable He describes how the dragnet will gather all manner of fish, the good and the bad, the keepers and the good-for-nothings. Some will be kept; some will be cast away.

 We have already seen simple truths laid aside spiritual truth in the previous parables. Some seeds fall on poor soil— some hearts are so hardened that the gospel does not take hold at all. Some seeds spring up, but then wither and never bear fruit. Some seeds fall on good soil. Spiritual growth happens… and cannot be stopped in the true children of the kingdom. As we learned in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, the kingdom grows from the miniscule to the mighty. We believers are to influence all of humanity like yeast put into dough. Finally, like a great treasure or a pearl of great price, NOTHING compares to the worth of belonging to Jesus’ kingdom. Wouldn’t you gladly give up anything and everything to have Christ as your treasure?

 The final parable of chapter 13 is quite similar to the parable of the wheat and the tares: there is a coming judgment and there is a final separation. In the meantime, we fish are all swimming in the same ocean. We are to be in it, but not of it. In the Parable of the Dragnet, Christ lets His first followers know that their gospel labors involve warning others of what they need to be saved from: an eternal hell awaits all who do not turn to Christ as Savior, and treasure Him as King.

 The “end of the age” refers to the end of the age of kingdom growth. It ends when Christ returns. When He returns, ALL people will face a final judgment and separation. No one escapes this final judgment and separation. Until then, we live in a sinful, fallen world. BUT, we are not supposed to execute God’s judgment. That’s His job! We are to proclaim the gospel rightly. We are always to be aware that we are approaching the end of the age.

 Who are “the righteous” mentioned in verse 49? None of us are born righteous. When Jesus describes the righteous, He is describing those who have been declared righteous. His righteousness has been credited to you when you repent, believe, and commit to following Him. At that point, you begin to try to live rightly, because your heart’s desire is to please your Savior.

 Kept or cast away. You are either in Christ, or in Adam, unchanged. There is no third option. No person has a free will that exists outside of the coming dragnet. Christ is the king coming to judge all people, whether a person chooses to recognize Him or not (Acts 17:30-31). Are you living a life that shows that you mostly treasure yourself? Most people live their lives oblivious to the hell that awaits them. The gospel is about heaven, yes… but it is also about hell. We all need to be saved from God’s wrath for sin (Matt. 13:50). The bad news is what makes the gospel such good news! Christian, because you have found shelter in Christ, you will never be held responsible for your sin. You have been accepted, restored, and filled with Him. You are becoming more and more like Him. You are headed toward an eternal home with Him FOREVER! In verse 51 Jesus asks, “Have you understood all these things?” Do you have ears to hear? Do you have peace that you have responded rightly? We don’t have to know everything; we just need to know the king and trust Him as He sends us out. All disciples are to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom: its rescue from God’s wrath, its nature, its supreme worth, and its ultimate victory.

 In today’s final verse, Jesus explains that His disciples proclaim how the New Covenant completes what has been prophesied in the Old Testament. As the Amplified Bible puts it, Jesus mixes “the fresh” with “the familiar.” We see our gospel all over the Old Testament: Ps. 2:12; Gen. 12:2-3; Ps. 22:27-28 for just a few examples. As Jesus’ disciples, we are to sow the gospel seed deliberately, decisively, and wisely. It will grow and bear fruit everywhere there are people with ears to hear

 *Father, please draw sinners to Yourself. Give us the strength and will to make You known. We long for the end of the age when all wickedness is gone and You return to take us home. Amen.*

**QUESTIONS**:

1. We started our service with a joyful baptism. Pastor Steve said that “baptism is a proclamation and a celebration.” Explain.
2. Jesus had already given this message with the Parable of the Wheat and Tares. Why did He repeat Himself with this parable?
3. How do the parables of Matt. 13 help you know what to expect as you await the Lord’s return?
4. It is clear that we are to preach the gospel rightly. What should the gospel message include? How should this message be delivered?
5. How do these parables help YOU as one who shares the gospel?

**“My Redeemer” (Bliss)**

 I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

**Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me;
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.**

 I will praise my dear Redeemer,
His triumphant pow’r I’ll tell,
How the victory He giveth
Over sin, and death, and hell.