

WARM-UP

- Are you choosy with the types of food that you like to eat? How so?
- Are you the type of person who organizes your things, or the kind who knows where everything is even in the chaos? Share an instance showing this.
- Do your first impressions of people affect the way you interact with them? Tell about a time you had a wrong first impression.

WORD *⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* **MATTHEW 13:47-50**

The kingdom of heaven is the dominion where God rules and reigns, of which the Church is a small part. The kingdom plan of God, to redeem His children and creation to Himself, is being fulfilled here and now, even as we live on the earth. Part of the mission of the Church is to usher in this kingdom. While He was on earth, Jesus told many parables that we can use to understand the kingdom of heaven. What does the parable of the net tell us about the kingdom of God?

1 | We are to preach the gospel regardless of who receives it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.” **MATTHEW 13:47**

The net, representing the preaching of the gospel, *gathered fish of every kind*. It is not our role to choose the fish we attract. In the same way, it is not our role to judge those that we preach the gospel to. How have you embraced the calling to preach the gospel? Have you experienced preaching the gospel to people you don't like?

2 | There is a coming judgment.

48"When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

MATTHEW 13:48-50

The picture that Jesus painted at the end of this parable was one of the coming judgment. The men who sorted the fish into good or bad represent the angels that will separate the evil from the righteous at the *end of the age*. God is the final judge. How does knowing that there is a coming judgment change the way you preach the gospel?

APPLICATION

- Every "fisher of men" first made the decision to follow Jesus. If you would like to make this decision, ask someone to pray with you.
- What are some ways you can preach the gospel without judgment? Pray that you would have God's heart as you reach out to people for the kingdom.
- Ask God for two to three people that you can specifically approach to preach the gospel. Come up with three ways you can build your relationship with them.

