

Parable Of The Fish Net

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Matt. 13:47-50

Matt. 13:47-50, *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

We are told that the kingdom, or church, is like a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered fish of every kind.

- The sea is the world.
- The net is the church.
- The enclosed fishes of “every kind” are members of the church.
- The good fishes are the truly spiritual children of God.
- The bad fishes are the wicked ones in the church.
- The beach represents the end of time.
- The sorting of the fishes represents the Judgment on the last day.
- The gathering into vessels represents the salvation of the godly.
- The vessels represent heaven.
- The casting away of the bad is the casting of the wicked one into hell.

Let us notice some of the fish we might catch in a net, and the lesson we can draw from them.

Types of fish...

Goldfish

They are good to look at.

Matt. 5:16, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

The works of a Christian must be visible to the world, so that the world can know how God wants them to act. The purpose is not to bring praises upon ourselves, but we do these works in such a manner as that God gets the glory, and not us.

Unfortunately, many take the glory upon themselves.

Matt. 6:1-2, *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”*

Performing the works of God in public is not the problem (as we should let our light unto the world), but when we take the credit for these ourselves (blowing a trumpet about the good things we do), then God is not getting the benefit.

The goldfish Christian is of two types. There are two different beauties, or attractions, in the world. For example: A woman dressed in the way of the world would catch the eye of most any man, and the world would say she was very attractive; but a woman dressed moderately would be attractive because she would be showing by her dress that she was a Christian, and God would get the credit.

Mudcat

It inhabits the muddy parts of the stream. Some species in Africa and South America actually bury themselves in the mud during the hot dry periods when the streams dry up. They lie dormant until the next rain return the water to the streams. It has filthy habits and is not a good fish for eating.

- Rom. 6:19-21, *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.”*
- Eph. 5:3-5, *“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”*

Men sometimes indulge in filthy things.

1 Thess. 5:22, “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*”

Don't be like the Mud Cat. Stay out of filthiness, and be pure.

Goggle-eye

It is all eyes; never misses anything.

The Goggle-eye Christian does not see himself, only the faults of others.

Matt. 7:3-5, “*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*”

Christ is not saying that we shouldn't try to help our brother with his faults, but we need to take a good look at ourselves. Do we have a similar problem that needs to be taken care of first?

Sun Perch

Small, but good for food. Lives in sunny parts of the stream or lake, and is quick to scent danger and flee.

Christians are to be like the Sun Perch. We are to dwell in the light of Christ. We do so by living according to His word.

- Psalms 119:105, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*”
- 1 John 1:7, “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*”

When we study the word of God, and walk in His light, we too are able to sense danger and flee from it, just as the Sun Perch.

1 Tim. 6:11, “*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*”

Eel

It is slippery and hard to hold.

The Eel represents an undependable person in the church, such as the occasion with John Mark.

Acts 15:37-40, *“And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”*

John Mark departed from his duty to God and service to Paul on his journey, but later realized what he had done and changed. He and Paul later made up and had a close relationship, and John Mark become an important asset to the church.

2 Tim. 4:10, *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”*

Demas also forsook Paul because he loved the world too much. There is no indication that Demas had changed.

Can you be depended upon to finish the work you started for the Lord?

Don't be an Eel Christian. Be stedfast in the gospel and service to Christ.

Scissor-bill

An attribute of the Scissor-bill is its apparent curiosity. It is always sticking its nose into the affairs of others. This is not a good quality for the Christian. I'm not talking about correcting a fault in a person where the scriptures plainly teach, but just meddling in affairs where a person has no place being involved. For example, many years back when Lynell and I were adopting our fourth child, some church members came to us saying that we had no business having more than three children. Since the scriptures are silent as to how many children we are to raise, this was clearly a case of people meddling into others' affairs.

- 1 Pet. 4:15, *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.”*

- 1 Thess. 4:11, *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,”*

Suppose Jacob was successfully convinced by these people who tell us to not have more than three children; there would have been no Joseph; as far as that goes there would not have been twelve tribes of Israel.

Let’s not be a Scissor-bill Christian.

Crawfish

The crawfish is similar to the lobster, only it lives in freshwater streams. When I was a child, I used to catch these in the creek that ran through our property on the farm. The unique quality of the crayfish is that it travels backwards. It’s tail straitens out, then snaps forward, making it swim backward. It is usually looking at where it has been, instead of where it is going.

- Luke 9:62, *“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*
- Heb. 10:38-39, *“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”*

The crayfish likes the muddy bottom. The Crayfish Christian is always looking longingly back at his sinful life, sometimes even returning to his sinful ways. This person will not be in the basket of fish taken to the kingdom of heaven.

The Christian should be up contending for the faith.

Trout

The trout was the primary fish I caught as a child. It is always alert, and awake. If the fisherman made a loud noise, or stood in plain view while fishing he wouldn’t have very good luck in catching one. The Trout is hard to deceive.

Eph. 5:6-17, *“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of*

the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

The Christian should be like the Trout: hard to deceive. To accomplish this, the Christian must understand fully the will of God, and the wiles of the devil.

Jellyfish

The Jellyfish has no bony structure; it is soft and without definite shape. It drifts this way and that, wherever the tide carries it.

- Eph. 4:14, *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,"*
- 1 Cor. 11:30, *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

We ought to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and not be weak like the Jellyfish.

Eph. 6:10-18, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Let's not be a Jellyfish Christian.

Electric Fish

It is found in the Belgian Congo. When touched, it gives off a shock equal to a six-volt battery.

Some members of the church are like that: repellent. For some reason, or another, they are bitter and angry about something, and it affects their relationship with others and their duty to Christ.

Eph. 4:31-32, *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*

If you are an Electric Fish Christian, put away your anger, and replace it with the love of Christ in your life.

Blue Bass

Excellent for food; it lives in clear rock-bottom streams, not in muddy and silty areas.

- Matt. 7:24-25, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”*
- 1 Cor. 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Be a Blue Bass Christian and be founded upon the rock, Jesus Christ, and be always abounding in your labor for Him.

Conclusion

All of the above can be found in the church of our Lord, but the undesirable shall be gathered out.

We should be like:

- Some of the Goldfish — let our good works be seen of men.
- The Sun perch: quick to scent danger and flee.
- The Trout: alert, awake, and hard to deceive.

- The Blue Bass: live a clean life, and be on a solid foundation.

If we so live, when the time of man is no more, we shall hear:

Matt. 25:34, *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

