



WELCOME TO MY WORLD STUDY GUIDE

WEEK 6: GONE FISHIN'

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 13:47-50

Reflections: We have been learning about the Kingdom of Heaven in our study of the Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13 on Sundays. The parables present the kingdom as both a present and future reality, a kingdom of both dynamic power and incalculable value. To maximize the broad application of the parables, Jesus regularly leaves the characters generic and nameless.

In the Parable of the Net from this past Sunday, Jesus mentions another character has always played a role in God's kingdom on earth: Angels. Angel's primary role was to assist God's people as the Lord directs. For example, angels warned Lot of the impending doom of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:15) and ministered to Jacob as he prepared to be reunited with his brother Esau (Genesis 32:1).

Angels continued this ministry in the New Testament. This is evident in Jesus' birth (Luke 2:8-15), early childhood (Matt. 2:13) and early ministry (Matt. 4:11). They were also instrumental in the life of the early church, assisting the apostles as they spread the Gospel. In Acts 27, Paul shared with the men aboard the Roman prison ship that an angel had encouraged him while in prison:

²³Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be

afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you."

In the Parable of the Net, the angels' role is a bit different. This role portrayed a dichotomy of realities. At the end of the age, at the culmination of the Kingdom of Heaven, the angels are described as having the role of separating the catch: the good fish from the bad. The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds describes this same act of separating by the angels:

*"The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
(Matthew 13:41-42)*

The angels' collection of the good fish is a reference to those who have decided to follow Christ as Lord and Savior. At the end of the age, Christ will return and will gather His Church to usher them into eternal glory with Him. At that time the hope of all believers will be fully realized.

The collection of the bad fish, on the other hand, but is a humbling reminder of the dire fate awaiting those who reject the Gospel. The Angels will separate these individuals to be judged for their works and receive their eternal sentence, an eternity separated from God Himself.

This seems like a shocking way to end a parable, but it was a calculated ending. Jesus wanted to leave us with the solemn reminder that God's patience is not eternal. God is presently casting the net but one day His fishing will be over. He will draw in His net and the time of judgment will be at hand. How urgent then is our need to be a disciple and make disciples with the short time God has given us.

Prayer Thought:

Lord, increase my influence in the lives of those around me for the sake of the Kingdom.

Application Question

How can you increase your spiritual influence in the world?

Group Discussion Questions:

1. As the Church, we are the net that God is casting out into the world.
 - Where has God casted you?
 - What kind of net are you?
 - How are you intentionally reaching those around you for Christ?