

## **Matthew 13:47-53**

Our parable today closes out Jesus' long teaching via parables in Matthew 13. Today's parable of the net gathering in all kinds of fish is similar to the wheat and weeds that we heard earlier. Let's look at it more closely.

First, notice that Jesus uses language that those listening could easily relate with. For example, Peter, James, and John were all fisherman. Additionally, there would have been many other fisherman listening to Jesus teach via parables. An initial observation is that when sharing the gospel with someone or talking about the things of God, make sure you use language people can understand!

Additionally, the net gathers all kinds of fish. Again, those listening would understand that some fish were ritually unclean to eat. Hence, some are kept and some are thrown away.

Furthermore, it's important to realize that both good and bad fish are part of the net. It's not the fish who do the sorting, but the fishermen. Like the parable of the wheat and weeds, the virtue of patience is needed. There is also an element of trust that at the end of the age, things will be put in right order.

The idea of the Last Judgment and separating the fish makes me think of Michelangelo's famous fresco of the "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel. It's no accident that it's before this painting the cardinals cast their votes for the next Holy Father!

The painting is a masterpiece. Christ is at the center with His right hand raised in judgment. Beside Christ the Blessed Mother who crouches powerless beside Him. Below Christ is the separation of the blessed from the damned.

On Christ's right, the blessed are going to heaven where the angels assist them. On Christ's left, the damned are being pulled into hell by demons. Directly below Christ, angels blow their trumpets to awaken the dead. The painting provides a visual of today's parable in splendid form.

As always, we are reminded not only of Christ's love, but also that what we do here is extremely important. May we pray not only for ourselves, but that all of our brothers and sisters will be open to Christ's mercy and experience His salvation.