

Matthew 13:47-53*NIV Harmony 90-91; Loyal 113-15***Introduction**

1. *American Pickers* is an American reality television series that premiered in 2010 on the History channel. In the series, the hosts travel across America in search of rare Americana artifacts and national treasures that they can buy to add to their personal collections or sell in their antique shops. They explore people's homes, barns, sheds, outbuildings, and other places where they have stored antiques and collectibles. They call upon amateur and serious collectors, hoarders, and people who have inherited overwhelming collections of items that they don't know what to do with. In their first episode of season four, they described themselves as “[W]e're pickers. We travel the back roads of America looking to buy rusty gold. We're looking for amazing things buried in people's garages and barns. What most people see as junk, we see as dollar signs. We'll buy anything we think we can make a buck on. Each item we pick has a history all its own. And the people we meet? Well, they're a breed all their own. We make a living telling the history of America... one piece at a time.”
 - a. We would all like to find hidden treasures of great value. That's antiquing!
 - b. The secrets revealed by Jesus in His kingdom parables are treasures of great value.
2. In this final lesson related to the kingdom parables in Matthew 13, we conclude our look at the unique kingdom parables found in Matthew 13 as we study the Parable of the Net (Mt 13:27-50) and the Parable of the House Owner (Mt 13:51-53).
 - a. In His conclusion to the kingdom parables, Jesus said, “...every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” (52)
 - b. Tonight we will pick out and examine the treasures of the kingdom revealed in Jesus' kingdom parables in Matthew 13.

A. The Parable of the Net (47-50)

1. The Setting and Audience is the same as it was with the Parables of the Weeds, Hidden Treasure, and Pearl. Jesus is in a house (cf., Mt 13:36) in a time of private teaching with His disciples.
2. The Context, as with all of Matthew 13 so far, is a continuing teaching of Jesus, both in public and in private, about the kingdom of heaven/God in the context of the growing opposition that He and the kingdom faced from the Jewish leaders and others. Soon, Jesus would face the cross, and He wanted His disciples to understand His purpose in coming and the nature of the kingdom that He came to establish on earth.
3. The Parable
 - a. **Read Mt 13:47-50.**
 - b. Jesus said to His disciples, “The kingdom of heaven is like (Gk., *homoia*) a net (Gk., *sagene*)...” (47)
 - 1) This net is one cast over the side of the boat and either pulled back in or trolled behind the boat.
 - 2) The image that comes to mind is like that in the television show *Deadliest Catch*, which follows fishermen in the Bering Sea during the Alaskan king crab and snow crab fishing seasons.
 - a) They set out huge nets with floats and then go back to haul them in to see what they have caught.
 - b) Along with the valuable crabs they often find many undesirable fish as well as trash which has to be separated from the good catch.
4. The Gathering
 - a. Jesus' parabolic net “...was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full (Gk., *eplerothe*), the fishermen pulled it up on the shore.” (47-48a)
 - b. The people had seen this done many times on the Sea of Galilee, and many of Jesus' disciples had experienced personally.

- c. This parable reminds me of three other incidents related to nets and fishing in Jesus' ministry.
 - 1) I am reminded of Jesus' words to His disciples that they would become fishers of men (Mk 1:17; Mt 4:19).
 - 2) I am reminded of Jesus' instructions to Peter in Lk 5:4 to "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." The disciples had been unsuccessful in fishing all night, but when they followed Jesus' instructions, they caught so many fish their boats nearly swamped.
 - 3) I am also reminded of the resurrected Jesus' instructions to His disciples in Jn 21:1-14. His disciples were back on the Sea of Galilee fishing and again hadn't caught anything. Jesus told them "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some" (Jn 21:6a). When they obeyed His command, they were unable to haul in the net with such a large catch.
- 5. The Sorting - "Then they sat down and collected (Gk., *suneleksan*) the good fish (Gk., *kala*) in baskets, but threw the bad (Gk., *sapra* – "rotten, bad, spoiled") away." (48b)
- 6. The Parable's Meaning
 - a. Jesus gave the meaning when He said, "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked (Gk., *poneros*) from the righteous (Gk., *dikaion*) and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (49)
 - b. This parable echoes the kingdom truth revealed in the Parable of the Weeds (cf., Mt 13:40-43).
 - c. Warren Wiersbe concludes, "The preaching of the gospel in the world does not convert the world. It is like a huge dragnet that gathers all kinds of fish, some good and some bad. The professing church today has in it both true and false believers (the parable of the tares) and good and bad. At the end of the age, God will separate the true believers from the false and the good from the bad" (Warren Weirsbe, *Be Loyal*, 113).

B. The Parable of the House Owner (51-53)

- 1. Read Mt 13:51-53.
- 2. Do You Understand?
 - a. Jesus asked His disciples, "Have you understood (Gk., *Sunekate* – P,A,Pf,2,P – "bring together, assemble, comprehend, understand") all these things? (Gk., *tauta panta*)" (51a)
 - b. Jesus asked if they understood not only the last Parable of the Net but also all His parabolic teaching about the kingdom of heaven.
 - c. The disciples replied simply, "Yes." (51b)
 - d. They did not yet fully understand His teaching, as revealed by their subsequent words and actions, but in time they came to understand the meaning of these parables through His death and resurrection.
- 3. A Final Parable About Jesus' Parables of the Kingdom
 - a. Jesus said, "Therefore every teacher of the law (Gk., *pas grammateus*) who has become a disciple (Gk., *matheteutheis*) in the kingdom of heaven is like (Gk., *homoios*) the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old (Gk., *ek tou thesaurou autou kaina kai palaia*)" (52)
 - b. Here we come to the image from *American Pickers* of those who search through treasure rooms (i.e., barns, sheds, and attics) in a search for old things of great value.
 - 1) But Jesus added that there are also new things of great value to be found and shared.
 - 2) G. Campbell Morgan writes, "'New' does not mean young. 'Old' does not mean worn out. The phrase means things fresh and ancient, rather than things young and worn out." (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 178).
 - 3) Jesus is the greatest teacher of the law (cf., Matthew 5-7), who brings out the treasures of the Old Testament and applies them with new, profound meaning in His New Testament teachings and ministry.
 - c. Wiersbe states, "When Jesus had completed this series of parables, He asked His disciples if they understood them, and they confidently replied, 'Yes, Lord.' Understanding involves responsibility. To explain this, the Lord added a final parable (Matt. 13:51-52) to remind them of their responsibilities. **They must be scribes who discover the truth**....One joy of the Christian life is the privilege of learning God's truth from God's word. But we must not stop there. **They must be disciples who do the truth**....The scribe emphasizes *learning*, but the disciple emphasizes *living*. Disciples are doers of the Word (James 1:22ff.), and they learn by doing. It is difficult to keep our lives balanced. **They must be stewards who dispense the truth**. ...The steward guards the treasure,

but he also dispenses it as it is needed. He dispenses both the old and the new. New principles and insights are based on old truths. The new cannot contradict the old because the old comes out of the new (Lev. 26:10). The new without the old is mere novelty and will not last. But the old does no good unless it is given new applications in life today. We need both” (Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 114-15).

- d. Those whom Jesus called and challenged to become true disciples (i.e., followers) were challenged to become “teachers of the law” themselves.
 - e. The secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been entrusted to Jesus’ disciples, including us, so that we can bring them out of God’s storehouse to apply and share with others as we proclaim the good news of Jesus and live out the truth of the kingdom of heaven on earth.
4. “When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there.” (53) – This is the end of Matthew’s account of Jesus’ core teaching on the kingdom of heaven/God.

C. The Meaning of the Kingdom Parables

1. Considering all of Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13, what have we learned?
2. Herbert Lockyer provides a helpful summary of these kingdom parables, as analyzed by William Arnot, under four themes: Relations, Progress, Preciousness, and Separation. He outlines the themes as follows (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Parables of the Bible*, 172):
 - I. Relations
 1. *The Sower*; the relation of the kingdom to different *classes of men*.
 2. *The Tares*; the relation of the kingdom to the *wicked one*.
 - II. Progress
 1. *The Mustard-seed*; the progress of the kingdom under the idea of *a living growth*.
 2. *The Leaven*; the progress of the kingdom under the idea of *a contagious outspread*.
 - III. Preciousness
 1. *The Hid Treasure*; the preciousness of the kingdom under the idea of *discovering what was hid*.
 2. *The Goodly Pearl*; the preciousness of the kingdom under the idea of *closing with what is offered*.
 - IV. Separation – *The Draw-net*; the separation between good and evil in the great day.
3. Lockyer presents the classic interpretation of these parables. However, I tend to favor the minority view, presented by Wiersbe and others, that interprets Lockyer’s categories of Progress and Preciousness in a different way.
 - a. The Progress of God’s kingdom will become great, but there will be opposition to that progress from both external forces (i.e., birds/Satan in the Mustard Tree) and internal forces within the church (i.e., Leaven/sin in the Loaf).
 - b. The Preciousness of God’s kingdom does call for us to recognize it and give all to be part of it. However, the Parables of the Treasure and the Pearl also point to the fact that God Himself in Christ Jesus saw such great value in humanity that He willingly gave up the glory of heaven to come Himself as Suffering Servant and Savior of the world (cf., Philippians 2).

D. Reflections

1. We have been entrusted with treasure from God concerning the nature of His kingdom and our place in it.
2. We must be disciples who discover the truth in God’s word, do it, and dispense it with grace to others.
3. We must share the good news of Jesus as widely and boldly as possible knowing that some people will receive it and others will either reject it or not allow it to transform them. However, some people will receive it with joy and enter the kingdom of heaven.
4. We will face opposition as we share the gospel both inside the church (i.e., Mustard Tree, Leavened Loaf) and from Satan and the world (Soils – birds, rocks, thorns; Weeds – darnel).
5. We must give thanks to God for sending Jesus who gave all of Himself to redeem us, His church/people, who are His hidden treasure and pearl of great value.
6. Our job is to cast wide the kingdom-net and receive those who respond. We are not the ultimate judge of others as to whether they are true disciples or not. We must be discerning of fruit but not judgmental in nature. In the end, God is the only righteous judge. He will, by directions given to His angels, call to account every human being for either receiving or rejecting His plan of salvation in Christ Jesus (i.e., Parable of the Weeds and Net).