

Fish of every kind

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[0 : 00] Well, I'd like us to turn this morning to God's Word in the New Testament and the Gospel of Matthew and Chapter 13.

And we shall read at verse 24 to the end of the chapter. Matthew 13 at verse 24.

He put another parable before them saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. And while his men were sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?

How then does it have weeds? He said to them, An enemy has done this. So the servants said to him, Then do you want us to go and gather them?

[1 : 25] But he said, No, lest in gathering the weeds, You root up the wheat along the pen. Let both grow together until the harvest.

And at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, But gather the wheat into my barn. He put another parable before them saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.

It is the smallest of all seeds. It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it is grown, it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, So that the birds of the air come and make their nests in its branches.

He told them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour till it was all leavened.

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables. Indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet.

[2 : 37] I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world. Then he left the crowds and went into the house.

And his disciples came to him saying, Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. He answered, The one who sows the good seed is the son of man. The field is the world and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.

The weeds are the sons of the evil one. And an enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age.

And the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the close of the age. The son of man will send his angels.

And they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers. And throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[3 : 43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.

Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all he had and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers, but threw away the bad.

So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things? They said to him, yes. And he said, therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of the house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

[5 : 14] Amen. And the Lord will add his blessing to that further reading of his own word. Let us then once again praise God. This time in Psalm 61.

You'll find that on page 293. Psalm 61. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer tend.

From the utmost corner of the land, my cry to thee I'll send. To the end of the verse marked five, five stanzas, to God's praise. O God, give ear unto my prayer, unto my prayer tend.

From the utmost corner of the land, my cry to thee I'll send.

What time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity.

[6 : 33] Do thou believe unto the road that higher is than I?

For thou hast for my refuge been, thou shalt define thy power.

And for defense against my cause, thou hast made a strong tower.

Within thy cavernacle I forever will abide.

And under cover of thy way, with confidence be guide.

[7 : 48] For thou hast for my heart. For thou hast given me the heritage of those I name.

For thou hast given me the heritage of those I name. Well, I'd like us to turn once again to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 13.

and reading at verse 47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

Or it is like a net let down. One thing the Lord does, as He does here in this particular chapter, is to repeat Himself again and again in the hope of what He is saying will eventually permeate the minds and understanding of those He is teaching.

If you were to read this chapter, I think I said it before on one occasion here, the Gospel of Matthew has no parables until you come to chapter 13. And then all of a sudden, you have seven parables in the space of this one chapter.

[9 : 38] And the Lord is introducing a body of teaching about the need for salvation and the danger of those who are not saved.

Many of us have attended the means of grace throughout our years. We've come to attend upon them and hear what's being said. Very often there's something that we hear in the passing and before we're out the door that we've forgotten what we've heard.

But the Lord in this chapter is trying to emphasize certain aspects of salvation which He wants us to hear, He wants us to believe and He wants us to understand what we are reading.

And here the Lord repeats the warning that there is to be a separation. Now we all know that there is to be a separation at the end of life.

But here in this particular chapter there are quite a few warnings and other parables throughout the Gospels there are more warnings about this aspect of being separated.

[10 : 55] First here we have the wheat and the tares and now we have the good fish and the bad fish. And both parables here are speaking of the separation of the righteous and the unrighteous or the godly and the ungodly.

Now the only difference between the righteous and the unrighteous and the godly and the ungodly is their receiving and resting upon Christ the Lord for salvation.

That's what the righteous do. That's what the godly do. The unrighteous and the ungodly dismiss that prospect, dismiss that opportunity of salvation and go many along the way unconcerned.

As James tells us like a man who is looked into the mirror we call the Bible the mirror of life looked into the mirror and turns away not knowing what he's just seen what he's glanced at not knowing what sort of man or woman we are having glanced into the mirror of life.

The question here is why these two parables teach the same thing the separation of the righteous and the wicked. we have the mixture of the good fish and the bad fish and in the parable of the wheat and the tares we have the separation of the wheat from the tares the angels work there's a separation and there's the terrible end of the wicked.

[12 : 37] It's all in the previous parable. So why on earth is the Lord repeating this again? But the Lord also introduces a new element into this parable that was not in the previous one of the wheat and the tares and that is that although the fate of the wicked has already been conveyed in the previous parable here the Lord speaks of that separation only he it makes it he makes it more conspicuous he brings it into more prominence to our view so that we left in no doubt as to what the Lord wants us to understand that's why he asks later on do you understand these things?

And although the disciples say yes almost in an offhand way what he really means is what you believe or what you understand do you believe? And that's why he's trying to introduce this aspect of bringing these things to our understanding and he says if you understand this well believe in the same way in the Sermon on the Mount about the the man who builds the house on rock and the man who builds the house on sand he says if you know these things happy are you if you do them so all the time the Lord is saying should understanding these things why on earth do you not do them in the parable or the story in fact of the rich young ruler he's rich young ruler says what must I do to inherit eternal life and the Lord says you know you know what you should do why do you come asking me go and keep the command and he says I've kept them all and you know the rest of the story but what I'm trying to say is the Lord says he knows that we know and it's because of that he finds fault with us it's because we know because we understand and yet we do not believe that is where we are convicted before God and before Christ and so you hear the Lord saying there's a coming judgment there is a coming separation and the fate of the godly will be decided on that terrible day the day of our death as the tree falls so shall it lie and so first of all we have here in this parable this aspect of the separation being absolute final the Lord often speaks here of a separation as in the good the bad fish as in the wheat and the tares of the righteous and the unrighteous and also in Matthew 25 of the sheep and the goats and that in its essence is what judgment means to separate or to judge and separate in other words hypocrite the end of that word krite or crisis is the aspect of judging and separation a hypocrite always judges himself to be good and others not to be so and he thinks of so better than others but the word

I'm talking about here is judgment krite or crisis and it's that which the Lord here is saying there will be a judgment there will be a separation there will be a divide between those who are saved and those who are lost in later parables like the five wise and five foolish virgins the fruitful and the unfruitful servants the sheep and the goats and the rich man and Lazarus especially the point is made is that there is a great gulf fixed and none can cross it now there are some important facts about this judgment I just want to mention as we go through you know very often or more and more in the case in today's world the aspect of hell and judgment is glossed over it's almost as though it's not in the preaching of God's word but it should be it's part of what the Lord speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ more than anyone else in the gospels speaks about this place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth he does it out of love he's not doing it to threaten or to frighten he's doing it out of love to convince you that here you have no continuing city there is going to be a judgment and please be on my side he sends his ambassadors as Paul says in Corinthians 5 2 Corinthians chapter 5 we are ambassadors of Christ as though

Christ did by us beseech you beg you to be converted because Christ wants each and every one of us here to know him and to be converted and to be healed by him now the first thing that the Lord wants us to to emphasize here in this parable is that it's absolute and it's final there's no going back there's no change now if you think of the Roman Catholic Church they have something called purgatory purgatory a place whereby where you go and you spend I don't know they don't define how many years thousands of years you'll be there and they even don't know how long popes are going to be there only when they're beatified as someone was recently made a saint that they will come out of that purgatory but there's no such place as purgatory in the scriptures it's something of their own imagination something they use to gather money from their people and they use in such a way because they every time you say a mass for those who are in purgatory you pay money to the priest or to the church and so there's no such thing at purgatory you can't pray to the saints you can't pray for somebody in hell to be taken out of it the judgment is full and final as the tree lies so as the tree falls so shall it lie and so at the moment as in

Augustine's book the city of God we are a mixed multitude here on earth the saved and the unsaved the righteous and the unrighteous the godly and the ungodly we're all here living together now in Augustine's city of God he talks about the fact that God separates himself a people he sanctifies the people separates the people out for himself and they continue to live in the world but they inhabit the city of God in the world as we are here today as you go to work there will be some of you who are Christians in that and you will be separate from those whom you work amongst you'll have different interests different ideals different aspirations different ambitions because your mind is not set here on earth your mind is set in heaven and you live your life here waiting for the day when the home call will come because here we have noticed abiding city and we go to the place that people call the long hole the place where we are called to go to like exiles who are away in a far country and we are longing to go home so Christians are longing to go home as and when the call will come and so there's a mix of good and bad redeemed and lost in the church but at the end of time the Lord will send his angels to execute judgment as he says in this parable the angels will come and separate out the good and the bad so either we will be blessed forever cleansed by the blood of Christ redeemed by his love or we will be in hell no one will be partly in one or partly in other no one will spend part of their time in one and part of their time in the other so the separation will be final absolute but it will also be a separation which is determined by whether we have received

[21 : 54] Christ or not not how we lived not what family we came from not what church we belong to but what we think of Christ is he God's son have we trusted in him have we received and rested upon him alone for our salvation or do we rest on something else that when we see God we're going to be able to boast about what we've done or how useful we've been or the money we've given to the church or are we going to say we've rested and on Christ alone and received him alone for our salvation the question will not be what have you done the question is what will be what think you of Christ and your life will have answered that question before you die and if he's

God's son and if we believe him to be God's son if you understand these things how have we lived our lives for him here the question of whether we've lived wholeheartedly for Christ receiving and resting upon him or whether we've lived for other things are we like Paul after or before his conversion the Paul who is ambitious the Paul who wanted to boast of his Jewishness and his being a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee or after his conversion where he says I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord that's the great difference between the old man the man who does not have the spirit of Christ and the new man the man and woman who have now been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and whose ideas and hopes and desires are changed counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him having fellowship with him having fellowship with his sufferings conformed being conformed unto his death it's not only absolute it's not only the separations are determined by what we do in this life it's also permanent the day of prayer of hope of salvation is past there's no bible or psalm book in the grave could wish that it were different that there was somehow those who were sent to hell would be awakened so much the situation that they could somehow cross the divide but as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Abraham says there's a great gulf fixed so that we cannot cross to them and they cannot cross to us only one person will tell you it's not permanent the lord in this parable speaks of his permanency the bad fish are cast away the tares are burnt both those are final situations but the devil will tell you no that's not the way at all it's the same as he said in the garden did God really say that and he say about Christ did Christ really mean that in the parables when he told you about these things the father of lies has been telling millions that the day of reckoning is far off that there's plenty of time and there's no need for repentance and reconciliation just now lulling us into some false sense of security that we can put it off to another day

Paul tells us again in Corinthians today now is the day of salvation today is the day of reconciliation don't put it off to another day but now is the accepted time and today is the day of salvation and they were all lost I think there was something like eight or ten people enjoying a good day out fishing doing nothing wrong except not watching the signs of the times not watching the approaching storm and as much as they tried to get to safety it was too late and for some of us that phrase will also become very pertinent it's too late the time of reconciliation has passed and so don't listen to the devil he's got no love for you he's condemned himself and he takes perverse delight in taking others with them into a lost eternity and so listen to

Christ the Lord and the shepherd of his sheep the Lord who gave his life for his sheep and then this judgment once again is final not only is it final it's terrible separation was final the judgment is final it's for our eternal good that our Lord warns us in such stark terms of the latter end of all unbelievers that there will be a weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth the prince of peace the god of love and yet as I said he more than anyone else brings this warning before us what makes hell so terrible is the unending suffering many of you have suffered pain or anguish or burning or whatever pain is for a time

[29 : 29] God uses time to ease the hurt and the pain but in hell there's no abating of the suffering of the agony of the terrible terrible anguish that those in the lost eternity will suffer the rich man in hell lifts up his eyes being in torment the parable of the sheep and goats goats are told depart into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels is it a literal fire can't answer that question it seems to suggest that people also want to suggest some commenters want to suggest that it's the valley of burning Gehenna just outside

Jerusalem but the Lord seems to suggest this weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth that it's a real place but I do believe the suffering is so intense that only fire can describe the agony of it of the burning of living flesh another thing that makes hell so unbearable is the memory that we will still carry with us for some time I've had this conviction of the mind soul duality in this world we have a mind in which all our memories filter through the mind is a motor function you know those who are have

Alzheimer's or those who have a brain injury perhaps aren't able to walk or they're paralysed or they lose their sight and as such the mind the motor function can't tell the hand or whatever to do especially those with memory loss you see them gradually not being able to walk not because anything is wrong with the limbs because the mind won't tell it can't lift their hands can't find their mouth eventually stop breathing because the motor function is diminishing but the memory remains secure because the memory is in the soul and we carry that memory for as long as we exist and we will exist for as long as God exists he's eternal we will continue to exist as long as God exists and so our memory will continue as well in the story of the rich man and

Lazarus both died Lazarus went to heaven the rich man went to hell in rich in hell the rich man prays to Abraham the rich man is told remember send Lazarus to me with a drop of water from the river of life rich man is told son remember in your life you had the good things and Lazarus did not but remember the memory is still there it's telling us the memory is alive and still working very efficiently much like the west today departing from the living and true God knowing honest blessings knowing all the opportunities that we've had much like the Israelites knowing coming out of Egypt seeing experiencing the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire experiencing going through the dead sea on dry land experiencing manna every morning and water out of a rock experiencing what happened on Mount

Sinai and forgetting it and going back to their old gods to be today forgetting the blessings that Scotland had over a hundred years ago all the great revivals that occurred especially around the time of the disruption when churches multiplied and were built all over Edinburgh and Glasgow and all throughout the highways that's why we have so many churches today many of the churches Scotland that are worshipping in today are old free churches built in the time of revival in the free church and so we forget all those blessings we forget what the Lord has done even on the island the blessings and revivals that have been experienced here in Barvis in Carloway in South Locks Point Stornway where are those blessednesses that we knew when first we saw the

[34 : 59] Lord we've had that blessing we've got the experience of the new birth and somehow we seem to forget and to go about doing whatever we want ourselves and possibly the hardest part of it all the memory will be to know that by our examples many others would also have found the road to a lost eternity whether it's parents or grandparents husbands or wives we've been examples to others so godless in our ways that perhaps we never truly pray never have family worship never teach others even the Lord's prayer as children and so we find ourselves here with that memory which will follow us even into death and I say that because the rich man wanted his

Lazarus to go to his brothers and to warn them he didn't want any real love for his brothers because they were all selfish characters or in their life but he didn't want his brothers there in hell with them accusing him of leading them to a lost eternity by his example perhaps the eldest in the family certainly the provider of the family leading them in a way which was very bad for their souls and then just finally when the Lord says have you understood these things the Lord is not only asking here have you understood these things intellectually but have you really believed what you've been hearing do you really believe what you have been able to understand and are you prepared to act upon it some years ago a preacher saying there are two types of fool well there's more than two but he said two types of fool in the world today those who do not believe there is a

God the Bible tells us as such are fools and the free church fool who believes there is a God and then doesn't take him seriously so the same thing applies to us under the gospel not only have we understood intellectually the precepts that we've spoken about here this morning and the various aspects of doctrine but do we really believe them are we really prepared to act on what we understand and believe and to encourage others to do the same the fool says in his heart that there is no God but there's a churchgoer who goes to church and believes there's a God as I said then doesn't take him seriously the parable reminds us that when judgment comes the Lord will send his holy angels to separate the just from the unjust the righteous from the unrighteous the godly from the ungodly and then who shall we be that's the real question that faces each and every one of us may it please the

Lord to bring us not only to understand the scriptures to believe understand what is being said intellectually but also to believe them to believe them with our whole heart and to place our lives for time and eternity on what we believe may the Lord then bless these thoughts to us we shall conclude now singing the god's praise in psalm 19 in st.

psalms psalm 19 at verse 7 the perfect law of God revives the soul of man the statutes which are sure make wise the simple one the precepts of the Lord are right and fill the heart with great delight we'll sing down to the end of the psalm that's five stanzas to God's praise the perfect law of God revives the soul of man his statutes which are over make wise the simple one the streets that of the Lord are right and fill the heart with great delight that radiant commands spread light on what we see the fear of God is pure and lands eternally the standards of the Lord express his perfect truth and righteousness a far more worth than gold than what pure gold they are than honey from their home than honey sweeter far they warn the servant of the Lord in keeping them his great reed to war who can discern the thralls forgive my hidden sin keep me from willful deeds may they not rule within and then

[42 : 14] I shall be free from blame and guilt let's of transgression shame shame Lord let the words I speak be pleasing in your sight and may rock in your thought be in your judgment right O Lord you are a rock to me you have redeemed and set me free and now may grace mercy and peace in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit one God rest on you and abide in you now and always Amen Amen Amen