

# Pt 8 the Drawing of the Net

by Alan Redpath

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*Alan Redpath's sermon emphasizes the church's role as a net for gathering souls and the inevitable separation of the righteous from the wicked at the end of the age.*

**Duration:** 37:02

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:47-49, Matthew 25:32, Mark 3:14, Acts 13:2, Romans 1:1

**Topics:** "Kingdom Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the parable of the net in the sea. He highlights the lessons to be learned from this parable, such as the authority for mass evangelism, the sanction for mission work, and the necessity for church organization. The preacher also discusses the fact of severance, explaining how the good fish are gathered into vessels while the bad fish are thrown away. The main purpose of the church, according to the preacher, is to reach people and multiply the effect of Jesus' ministry among them.

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## Transcript

Let me just read one or two verses to you, reading from the King James Version this morning, at verse forty-seven, Matthew thirteen and verse forty-seven. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which 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 vessels, but threw away the bad.

So will it be at the end of the age the angels came out and separated the evil from the righteous and threw them into the furnace of fire. There men will weep and gnash their teeth. Have you understood all this? They said to him, Yes.

And he said to them, Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things old and new. It's not the authorized version, it's a mixture. Ready? May I take a final look, as I said, at this thirteenth chapter and the parables this morning? Of the eight that we are considering, speaking of the progress of God's kingdom on earth between the first and second advent of our Lord, two of those eight, of which this is one, place their emphasis on the ultimate, the end, the final issue.

The parable of the wheat and the tares and the parable of the net thrown into the sea. These speak to us of the final issue. I think it's extremely interesting that in the first of these, the wheat and the tares, which

we have considered, the emphasis is on the wonderful destiny of the believer, verse forty-three.

That parable, you remember, was told to the crowd, the multitude. The emphasis in it was of the wonderful future that awaits the Christian. There shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.

In the second, dealing with the net, related to the disciples, the emphasis is on the awful fate of the unsaved, verse forty-nine. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire. It almost seems that the strength of the appeal to the man who is unsaved is to give him a glimpse of the glory of heaven, of what it will be like.

And the strength of the appeal to the Christian is to give him a glimpse of what hell will be like. As much as to say, I hope this isn't just imagination, but as much as to say, let the non-Christian, the unbeliever, catch just a little glimpse of the glory of heaven and the future that awaits the Christian in his mouth of water. And he will be persuaded to drop the entanglements of sin for the glory of the kingdom.

On the other hand, give a child of God, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, just a little glimpse of hell and his devotion to Jesus and his service for the salvation of others. We'll have a passionate longing to see their salvation. Now, that all just came to me this morning, and if you want me to repeat it, I will, but I'm just, you know, introducing the subject today with that.

If you've got it, the gist of it. A great friend of mine who was a minister in London, I heard him preach a little while ago, and he was preaching on hell. That's a subject that's very rarely heard, but that was his sermon.

And he said, Some little time ago, I asked the Lord to show me what it meant to be lost eternally. He never answered that prayer, because I think if he had, I'd have gone mad, out of my mind. Get it? Got the gist of it? You've all been looking at me, not doing your notes, but however, the Lord bless you, I hope you've got a better memory than I have, else in two minutes you'll forget it.

You don't want me to go through it again, no? Okay, you see the idea. Thank you very much. Are you nodding your head because you do? No, it's all right.

Come and ask me about it afterwards. Now, with just that little thought in mind, let's turn to this parable of the net, and see what the Holy Spirit has to say to us this morning. Notice first, here is the function of the church.

Verse 47, The kingdom of heaven is like to a net, the Revised Version puts it, a dragnet, that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore. Here we are this morning in the atmosphere of the sea, waves, busy fishermen who reach a fishing ground and then throw their net into the sea.

The net in use here is the kind that makes a great haul. It needs a large boat, strong equipment, and a disciplined crew. It's left to swing to the tides and the waves, and then at evening time, or maybe early in the morning, the whole area of the fishing ground is encircled while the net is slowly and carefully brought ashore.

You've probably seen this in operation. This was the kind of net the disciples had used before. One night, they caught nothing and dragged it to the shore to find it empty and torn.

You'll find that in Luke, chapter 5. And it was the same kind of net they used on another similar occasion with similar results. John, chapter 21. But this time, before they brought it in, they heard a voice on the shore telling them to throw the net into the right side of the ship.

And it was filled with 153 fish. And Jesus stood on the shore, the risen Lord. Now, this is not the main emphasis of the parable, but I say there are some tremendous lessons to learn here.

Here's all your authority for mass evangelism. All your authority for mass evangelism. Here's the sanction for mission home and abroad.

Here's the necessity for church organization and machinery. That net was a piece of very elaborate and carefully designed material. And the boat and the tackle and the disciplined crew tell us of careful organization, planning, cooperation, with one great object in view.

And it all needed capital, that's money, investment, time, talent, sacrifice, and above everything else, a united plan of action. A united plan of action. You remember that the Lord first trained 12 people, just nobodies, but he trained them.

Mark chapter 3, and at verse 14, I think, that they might be with him and that they may go out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. First, that they might be with him and then get out to preach and then use authority to cast out devils. That was their one object.

Get it down as ready to reach people and to multiply the effect of the ministry of Christ among them. That's what it's all about. To reach people and to multiply the effect of the ministry of Jesus.

And he left his church on earth designed for that one purpose. To sweep the ocean everywhere. And that's what you and I are here for.

Some of us will be at one end of the net and some of us at another. We probably will never meet again this side of heaven but we're all partners. Together.

Workers together with God. 1 Corinthians 3, 9. And the missionary overseas can't carry on his ministry without the prayer and support of the church at home. And the pastor cannot carry out his ministry without the prayer, cooperation of all his people.

And none of us can witness without prayer backing. Once you become a Christian you cannot go it alone. You cannot be independent.

You read of an independent fundamental church there's no such thing. There's no church that is independent. Dependence is the right word in the New Testament.

The church is Christ's great fishing net to catch people. And what the whole church is the body of Christ so every local church must be. The net of every fellowship the net of every fellowship is composed of every member flung out into the stream of life worldwide.

Get this down. Ready? Going slow now. A missionary program is not a branch or an arm of the church.

It is the church. Evangelism is preaching a whole Christ by the whole church throughout the whole world. That's evangelism.

Preaching a whole Christ by a whole church throughout the whole world. Now ready? Get this. Ooh.

Sorry, what's the matter now? Are you? Is that not? Do I go again? All clear? What do you want me to repeat? The whole thing? Lord bless you. Here we are. Come on quickly.

Ready? Getting to top overdrive. Come on. Right.

I forgot what I was going to say. Oh yes. The church is Christ's fishing net for catching people.

What the whole church is every local church must be. The net is composed of every member flung out into the stream of life. The missionary program is not a branch or an arm of the church.

It is the church. Evangelism is preaching a whole Christ by a whole church throughout the whole world. A long word coming.

The worthwhileness the worthwhileness w-o-r-t-h w-h-i-l-e n-e-s-s worthwhileness One word. Not a very good word really. The worthwhileness of any movement depends upon its ability to mobilize every member of it to propagate that's p-r-o-p-a-g-a-t-e propagate what it believes.

Okay? What does that mean? You had some statistics yesterday that I gave you about the average church in Britain and America. You have that in your notes somewhere. Do I give it to you again? I don't want to take time.

I'll give it to you. Average church of the average total number on the membership roll 5% don't exist 10% can't be found 25% never attend church 30% have no mission or interest 75% never attend midweek service and prayer meeting 90% have no family worship at home and 95% never win anybody to Jesus. You should have something like that already.

That's failure to propagate. Propagate means reproduce. And we have some wonderful people in our churches but they never reproduce.

Lovely people trustees, elders, deacons lovely, sound people but they never reproduce. You know what I mean? That's propagating. Or that's failure to do so.

Now this is the important thing or it's all important but this is especially so. If the whole of fish H-A-U-L is to be worthy of Jesus the crew must be disciplined. A tackle must be strong.

You have one hole in the net and that will allow many fish to escape. Every time Christian people won't work together or keep aloof won't give themselves to this task the supreme task of the church won't pray won't give that creates terrors and rents in the net. Again we need to remember that we're going to be partners in this all of us.

Nobody more important than anybody else. Nobody more important than anybody else. Nobody can be independent of the other and each of us will have to ask one day what contribution am I making to this campaign of the whole church as distinct from my own little plans which I want to do on my own because I thought them up and I want to be chairman of the committee that does them.

What contribution am I making to the church as a whole? The Christian who acts independently of the fellowship of the church is responsible for its ineffectiveness. The Christian who acts on his own to do his own thing is responsible for the ineffectiveness of the church and its witness. So when I begin to get into

the ministry and the fellowship of a local church how will what I want to do affect the fellowship as a whole? I've got to think that out.

Fellowship is a wonderful word. It really it's strange to say it's a word that had a very human meaning before it had a spiritual one. It really means well the best real definition of it is Siamese twins.

That's fellowship. Who share the same bloodstream the same life Siamese twins that's fellowship. Sharing life with another.

Compare that with 11am Sunday morning somebody dashes into church in a hurry how are you? Fine thanks bye and they sit down. Nobody speaks to them. They go out thanks great time goodbye and that goes on year after year in evangelical churches and it's called Christian fellowship.

And people come into a church listen to the preacher oh don't listen and out they go. And so often nobody has said anything to them. You read oh my 1 Corinthians chapter 12 I was a good giver sometime to that.

The gifts of the spirit Paul's classic example the gifts of the spirit 1 Corinthians chapter 12 just let me leave with you one or two thoughts about it and you will begin to think why I must read about that. We've all been baptized in the spirit. The baptism of the spirit is not something that happens to you after you're born again it happens when you are born again.

Nobody can be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. We are baptized by the spirit into the body of Christ. And we're each given some gifts.

There are 21 gifts of the spirit not all in 1 Corinthians 12 14 of them there. Others are in Ephesians chapter 4 and Romans chapter 12 but about 21 all together. Nobody ever has had all of them.

You can't have all the gifts but you can have all the graces. That is to say nobody has all the gifts of the spirit that are outlined there but you can be filled with the spirit in character. The gifts are for ministry and service.

And the thing is to decide what gifts you have and what gifts God has given you and never to be jealous of somebody else's gift. To say that oh yes I'm leaving me to doubt around so I can risk saying this now and you won't catch me. To say that to be baptized with the spirit you must speak in tongues is totally unbiblical.

Some people have the gift of tongues. I don't. It takes me all my time to speak right with the one tongue I have got.

Sorry. But undoubtedly unquestionably that's a gift but you press that on somebody else that's unbiblical and highly dangerous. Not everyone has the gift of healing.

Some have. And it's right to exercise it. But to demand of somebody who is ill you must have faith and be healed instantly.

That's unbiblical. I remember when I had a very severe stroke some twenty years ago some dear kind lovely people wrote to me and said if only you had faith you would be well today. I let my wife answer that.

I was healed divinely healed. I never had instant healing but I had divine healing all the same. You know what he called her who was a specialist in that job it's a neurologist I think.

The very best in Edinburgh came to see me and he gave me his prognosis and said well I think that you may you may live for another five years if you do nothing and possibly ten but you won't make seventy. I'd like to meet that chap right now because that was about twenty years ago. Here I am alive divinely healed but not instantly healed and I tell you I wouldn't have missed the lessons I learned in those twenty years for anything.

If I had been immediately healed it would have been a disaster.

And I turned and saw I never read my Bible never prayed for three months and one day one day I picked up my Bible and happened in quotes to open it at Psalm 39 and I read thy stroke has consumed me I am crushed by the blow of thy hand and I saw it like a flash the devil had nothing to do with it the Lord had done it to teach me some lessons because I had been putting work before worship orthodoxy before obedience being proud of being fundamental you know what I mean and when I saw it I wept like a child God broke my heart and then from sinking sands he lifted me from shades of night to paths of light praise his name he lifted me he did it his best way so what I'm saying to that boy is when you get into the ministry whatever it is don't insist on somebody else having a particular gift God

knows what best to give us and the thing that matters is most now you can start writing again only for a very few minutes so take heart you'll be back to letters and coffee surely look I mean not look listen no I don't mean that write ready from 1 Corinthians 12 be sure that you have the gift which God has given you and exercise that gift in the whole fellowship of the church don't be independent don't covet somebody else's gift don't be jealous thank God the gift he's given you of course you may get others and some that you have may be taken from you but the fellowship of a church worldwide depends on every person exercising the gift of the spirit that God has given them nobody is indispensable nobody can act on their own and every Christian is a charismatic Christian you can't be a

Christian without being charismatic what's the word mean? charis grace medic gifts if you haven't got any grace if you haven't got any gifts you're not even born again forget about the charismatic movement the only charismatic movement I know that began at Pentecost has been going on ever since mind you I'm not saying that to throw the thing aside it's done tremendous impact upon the whole church this century the awakening of interest in the Holy Spirit it's such a pity that some people take it to extremes now let me finish get on with the lecture you can come and tackle me about all that some other time so we are fellowship in fellowship labourers together with God that's the function of the church now here is in verse 48 what I call the fact of severance the fact of severance

s-e-v-e-r-a-n-c-e the fact of severance that's verse 48 when they drew the net to shore they gathered the good and the vessels but threw away the bad now here is the main emphasis of the parable while the net is in the sea it gathers fish of every kind nobody knows what's in it the fishermen can't see but they carefully draw it all in carefully when it's full the good and the bad and then they sit down on the shore to undertake the task of collecting the good and vessels and throwing the bad away so shall it be verse 49 at the end of the age God has set a time when the net will be drawn in when the gospel will have been fulfilled its purpose throughout the whole world the net is filling up right now sometimes quicker than others it's being drawn in verse 49 then notice this the angels

shall come forth and separate the evil from the righteous that word separate is a very strong one seven times in the new testament it's translated that way I'll give you one or two references you can look them up sometime separate me Barnabas and Saul Acts 13 2 in other words put a boundary around them set them

free separate them for the ministry which I have for them Paul said Romans 1 verse 1 I am separated to the gospel cut off Matthew 25 32 before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate one from the other as a shepherd separates his sheep from goats I wonder one day whether there will be more sheep or more goats that depends on us doing the job Matthew 25 32 setting a boundary you see in every church in every fellowship there are some people who are real and there are

some who aren't but there's no boundary no boundary the net was carefully drawn in and all that was in it to the shore and God's care for everybody is so real he loves them all even though some are not real but one day the boundary is set up forever the hypocrite and the true Christian will be parted and I'm so thankful that it's the angels from heaven do the job the angels from heaven do what no angel on earth could do they sever the wicked from the just we needn't ask how they distinguish they've got their instructions from him who knows everybody there'll be no blunder no mistake on that day the Lord knows those who are his 2 Timothy 2.19 I'm not concerned with the sequence of events on that day and that's not the issue of the parable to enter into it now would be impossible anyway I

am concerned however that we realise this tremendous inescapable fact of severance good and bad true and false are drawn into the net but some are worthless therefore severed with weeping and gnashing of teeth and you notice the agents whom God uses to do that are angels they've intervened in human history before they're serving today Hebrews 1.14 now they're not all worshipping spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation they worship in the presence of the Lord they cry holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts but when somebody like you and me cries out woe is me for I am undone a man of unclean lips they come and apply the life coal they minister to us

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