

Small Group & Personal Bible Study

Memory Verse: Matthew 24:35

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Study Questions: Matthew 13:47-50

1. What specific event is Jesus describing in this parable?

Jesus is speaking of the final judgment of man. When God will give the reward of Heaven to His followers and the punishment of hell to those who choose not to follow. This separation is real and coming. Most people choose to ignore this truth. Even among Christians, many choose to believe that there is no hell, only heaven. Jesus believed in hell and warned us about the judgment of mankind.

2. Why do you think Jesus used fishing with a large net as his parable to help the disciples understand the separation process?

Fishing was something his disciples understood. They knew the importance of keeping good fish and getting rid of the bad. They also knew that to get the good you would have to weed through the bad.

3. Why is good and bad fish such a good example of the judgment and separation of God's people from those who will not follow Him?

When you catch fish, you must decide which to keep. In the fishing parable we hear it as good and bad fish. You can't keep a bad fish and hope it becomes a good fish. The fact is bad fish just gets badder (or should I say worse). Yet a good fish is exactly what the fisherman wants. I remember as a child, when I tried to fish I always caught fish that my dad made me throw back in, either it was too small or he would tell me, you can't eat that fish. Bottom line, when I caught a fish he let me keep, hallelujah, I felt like I was in heaven (figure of speech). This indicates the joy of good fishing. The bottom line is that if I want to catch good fish, I have to cast the net and expect that bad fish will get caught as well. At some point I will need to separate those fish. God has the day and the hour chosen but only he knows when.

4. After reading Matthew 13:47-50 and Matthew 24 & 25, do you ever worry about the final judgment day? Why or why not?

Let people share their hearts about the final judgment day. Use this as a time to encourage them in their fears. Admonish them for their doubts and turn them to truth in love towards Jesus Christ. Rejoice with them in their hope of Heaven. It is normal to worry about the judgment day but when we have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb, then perfect love drives out fear. Read 1 John 4:13-18. If I fear the judgment day, then I need to acknowledge Jesus as my savior and let Him live in me.

5. What does meditating on judgment day cause you to do?

The message of judgment should make our hearts break for the lost. It should move us to spread the gospel to those we love. It should move us to live for God. It should help us long for His presences in our lives. We should long for Heaven.

Next week we will begin a study on Heaven. Before we begin that study, read through the teaching of Jesus found in Matthew to understand what the end will be like. Jot down journal notes of what you learn as you read these passages. Allow God to speak truth into your life and use it for His kingdom purpose.

Weekly Reading Plan:

Day 1	Matthew 24: 1-35	Signs of the End of the Age
Day 2	Matthew 24:36-51	The Day and The Hour Unknown
Day 3	Matthew 25:1-13	Parable of the Ten Virgins
Day 4	Matthew 25:14-30	Parable of the Talents
Day 5	Matthew 25: 31-46	The Sheep and the Goats