

SESSION 1: THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 13:47-50

QUESTIONS

1. What is so special about a dragnet? What have you learned from the explanation of the word in the video/script?
2. How is the church a net for Jesus Christ?
3. What truth is this parable revealing to you about the kingdom of God?
4. Is there anyone with whom you would not be willing to share the gospel? If so, why? What would have to change for you to be able to share the love of Christ?
5. Reflecting on the analogy of the dragnet as the church of Christ, why is it important to be united with one another in our community and congregation?
6. What does this parable tell us about the final judgement? What does it tell us about judging others today?
7. What's the link between this parable and our church's Mission statement? *Our Mission is reaching out to all people in order to teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptize them with water and the Holy Spirit. Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others.*

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SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 1: THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

Today we'll be diving into the parable of the dragnet – hopefully we won't get tangled!

Let's read it together. You can find it in Matthew, chapter 13, verses 47 through 50. Feel free to follow along if you'd like.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

At a first glance, we see that the first two verses make up the parable itself, and the last two verses form an explanation. For this session, we're going to focus our attention on the first half.

Chief Apostle Leber interpreted this parable as signifying the divine love of Jesus Christ, drawing mankind to Himself. How do people learn about the love of Christ? Through His church! We, as the Church, are the net. He explained that *"a net does not consist of isolated threads but of threads that are tightly interwoven! This is how we should be united with one another."*

The term "dragnet," which is used in the parable, appears only once in the Bible. While nets were used often by the disciples, as many were fishermen, a dragnet is a specific type of net. It literally **drags** through the sea, **indiscriminately** picking up everything in its path. And that is what we are called to be as the Church: indiscriminate and non-judgmental in our sharing of Christ's love. The net *"gathered some of every kind"*; the gospel of Jesus is universal and available to all.

Let's read the next verse for another clue: *"[...] when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away."*

That first phrase, *"when it was full"*, points us to the final judgment day. This will be when everything is sorted out. Although this is a parable about judgment, the judgment is not ours to make. The judgment is the Lord's, and only He knows what will be thrown away. We could liken this to someone picking beach glass out of the sand; to one it might look like garbage, but to another it is a beautiful treasure. As we are all sinners, it's impossible for us to know the condition of someone's soul from the outside.

That is why it is not our responsibility to sort or judge – rather, we are the gatherers! What a beautiful connection this makes to our Mission statement – *reaching out to all people in order to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ...* Let's create this net of love in our congregations and in our communities, and excitedly share the message of Christ with everyone in our path!