

## TOUGH PARABLES

### Wrestling With Jesus' Challenging Stories

#### Week 2: The Fishing Net

**Main Point: We are called to share the message of Jesus to everyone.**

**Main Scripture: Matthew 13:47-51**

#### THE WHAT

##### ME:

**Share a time where you had to make a big decision. What made the decision easy or hard?**

##### WE:

We all face decisions in life—some decisions more important or difficult than others. What's an easy decision you've made today? (What to wear, what to eat for lunch, etc. Anyone want to share?) Think back, what's a really hard decision you've had to make? (Anyone want to share?)

##### TRANSITION:

One decision we cannot escape is the choice to either follow or reject Jesus. And even if we decide to live life as a follower of Jesus, we must remember to give other people in our lives the chance to make that choice, too.

#### SO WHAT

##### GOD

**Read Matthew 13:47-51 together.**

Let's spend a few minutes exploring this passage to see what we can learn from a brief parable about a fishing net.

##### 1. We are called to share the message of Jesus.

Those of us who are followers of Jesus play an essential role: We are called to tell others about Jesus, to introduce them to him so they, too, can encounter the person who has changed our lives. This parable reminds us that the message of Jesus must be shared and we are the ones who must do it.

##### 2. Jesus' net catches all kinds of fish.

The kingdom of heaven is offered to everyone. But at the end of time, there will be a sorting process where only those who truly followed Jesus will be allowed to enter and spend eternity with God. And as we read this parable, it's a reminder about the importance of choosing to follow Jesus—the most important decision we can ever make.

##### 3. We are not called to decide who's in and who's out.

We sometimes fall into the trap of judging who is a genuine follower of Jesus and who isn't—and then judging or condemning people we think aren't true Christ-followers. It isn't our job to separate the righteous from the wicked. Our job is to follow Jesus, truly make him the center of our lives, and lovingly tell others about the message of Jesus.

##### GOSPEL MOMENT

Jesus died for "all the fish," aka everyone. What do I mean by that? The Bible says that everyone has sinned and because of SIN (which is anytime we do something wrong/not God's way) everyone's relationship was broken. God sent His son JESUS to suffer and die a painful death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. When we chose to believe and give our lives to God, we receive eternal salvation and a restored

relationship with God. It's not about "doing enough good" or "going to church enough," it's all about faith in Jesus.

## **TRANSITION**

Jesus doesn't force His love on us or anyone else. He gives us all the gift of choice. He doesn't want robots who have to follow and love Him - He knows for us to truly love Him it must be a choice.

## **NOW WHAT?**

### **YOU**

Some of you have made this chose already. Some of you maybe have not. If you haven't CHOSEN to believe in Jesus, why not? What is holding you back? I promise you it's not as great as what you will receive if you chose to follow Jesus Christ with your heart and your life. I encourage you to TODAY, RIGHT NOW, make the chose to follow Jesus. I'm going to ask everyone to close their eyes so there is no pressure. And I'm going to say a prayer. These words aren't magic, but believing and saying them in your heart has GREAT POWER. If you chose to follow Jesus, I want you to pray them in your heart RIGHT NOW:

Jesus, because of my sin I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you chose to suffer and die for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. Guide my life and help me to do your will. In your name, Amen.

Now if you said this prayer in your heart for the first time, I want you raise your hand so we can celebrate with you. AWESOME!

### **WE**

Once we received Jesus' love and truth, it becomes our job to share it. It's like a light put inside our hearts that is meant to shine for the whole world to see. Trust me, I get it, this can be scary. But God is with us and we are in it together. We can encourage and support each other, even pray for each other that God will give us His words and boldness to share His love.

### **PRAY**

God, thank you for loving us so much! We pray that you will give us your words to share your message with others and a boldness to do so. We pray for people in our life who don't know you - that they would come to know and accept your love. Amen.