

## CASTING NETS

### I. FISHING FOR MEN

#### A. **Mark 1:16-20**

When Jesus first encountered four of His twelve apostles, He found them using nets because they were in the fishing business. They all left those nets behind to become “*fishers of men*” – meaning their new occupation was to catch people for Christ.

#### B. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:5-15**

Scripture compares soul-winning to other jobs, as well, including farming and construction. Metaphors like these help us to make sense of spiritual work.

#### C. **Proverbs 11:30**

Whether likened to fishing, farming, or building, the important thing is to be soul winning.

#### D. **Matthew 28:19-20**

Jesus commanded the apostles to preach and baptize everywhere and then to teach the new disciples to do likewise. That applies to us.

### II. NETS, NOT HOOKS

#### A. **Matthew 17:27**

Hooks were available for fishing. If the Lord wanted His fishers using hooks, He could say so.

#### B. **Matthew 13:47-50**

Jesus called the kingdom of heaven a dragnet, though. The difference between hooks and nets is that hooks generally target certain kinds of fish, possibly using lures or specific bait, whereas nets are cast widely and meant to bring in all kinds. The call of the gospel is not meant for the rich or the poor, the young or the old, male or female, black or white, Democrat or Republican, foreign or

domestic; that dragnet is meant to take everyone in. Demographics are irrelevant.

**C. Luke 8:5-8, 11-15**

The parable of the Sower, which uses a farming metaphor for the spread of the gospel, does not mention planting the seed, but sowing it, telling us it was just tossed onto the ground. This parable says nothing about cultivating the soil – tilling, fertilizing, removing rocks or weeds; in fact, the various qualities of soil which the seed falls into is the very point of what Jesus is teaching. That may not be very careful agricultural technique, but it is the correct method for evangelism.

**D. Mark 4:26-27**

Again, scattering is the method of getting the gospel out, and notice “*he himself does not know how.*” Churches have seminars on evangelism, teaching specific methods of getting newcomers to church, but the techniques taught by Jesus through several parables is just get out there and preach and teach! There is no special methodology. The sower or the fisher doesn’t need to know how it works, only that it works! We are not baiting anybody with fancy schemes. We are not luring anyone with enticements like coffee shops, daycare, rock concerts, or anything that is not the soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. We are casting a dragnet and bringing all to the Lord.

**E. Luke 5:1-11**

In a more detailed account of Jesus calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be fishers of men, He demonstrated the effectiveness of fishing under His direction. They hadn’t caught a fish all night, but when He told them to lower their nets, they caught enough fish to nearly capsize two boats! May we trust in His ways ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)) and lean not on our own understanding ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#))!

**III. GOOD FISH WILL BE SEPARATED FROM BAD**

**A. Matthew 13:47-50**

There will be a separating of good fish from bad.

**B. Leviticus 11:9-12**

Good fish from bad doesn't refer to preferences of taste, like swordfish versus tilapia. Under the Law of Moses, which was in force when Jesus was living, certain foods were not kosher, including shark, calamari, and all manner of shellfish. Those rules are no longer in place as Christ is the end of the law (**Romans 10:4**), but His earliest hearers would have understood that some fish were not fit to be kept, but destroyed.

**C. Matthew 13:36-43**

At the end of the age, just as in the parable of the dragnet, angels, just as in the parable of the dragnet, will cast into the fire, just as in the parable of the dragnet, those who offend. In this parable of the tares, understand that *"the field is the world"* – so we are not looking at refusing to discipline unrepentant sinners in the church when we leave it to the angels at the end of the age to do the separating.

**D. Matthew 25:32-33**

Whether analogizing with fishing, farming, or shepherding, there will come a judgment at the end and we need to be prepared.