

According to the internet today, there are 2.4 billion people who call themselves Christians. However, these 2.4 billion include “Christians” who are not true believers of Christ. These professing “Christians” are not saved, and thus cannot enter heaven. There is a need for us to examine our own salvation. What kind of Christians are we? Are we truly the people of God, or are we no different from those who merely call themselves Christians but have no true salvation? Through the parable of the good and the bad fish, Jesus warned His disciples to make sure that they themselves were truly disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 The Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 13:47-48)

Jesus first described the kingdom of heaven as a drag net that was to be dragged across the sea, capturing everything that was in its path, whether it be fishes, debris, plants, etc. And when the net was finally pulled out of the sea, the fishermen would have to separate the good fish from the bad fish. This is like the local church. It is made up of a mixed multitude of people who call themselves disciples of Christ. But, sadly, not all of them are truly born-again. Even though modern-day Christianity consists of many denominations, in God’s eyes there are only two types of Christians:

- (a) those who are clothed in God’s righteousness, are spiritually alive, and live in obedience to the Lord;
- (b) those who are spiritually rotten/dead, and are false believers, characterised by sin and wickedness.

Fellow brethren, we must not be naive to think that this applies only to the church at large, and not to our local church just because we do not practise liberalism (like other denominations), and that just because we are a good church, we must be saved. While it is good that our church stands on the truth of God’s Word, it is not the only thing that we are to be concerned about. This parable speaks specifically of the judgment of each individual fish. We must individually and personally reflect on our own lives. Even if the church you are attending may be a sound and God-honouring church, it does not necessarily mean that you are definitely saved.

2 The Judgment of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 13:49-51)

Next, Christ spoke of the judgment that will be faced by those who are considered the bad fish: they will be separated from the good fish and shall be cast into the lake of fire for eternity because this is what they deserve. They have refused to have fellowship with Christ on earth and they have refused the gift of salvation that has been freely extended to them from God on earth and now God will send them to the place of their own choosing because they choose to be false believers and they choose to deceive themselves. And now they will suffer the consequences of their choice for eternity.

Therefore, fellow brethren, let us check ourselves. Do we have the characteristics of a good fish, both internally and externally? This concerns our own individual, eternal destination. Be sure of our salvation.

3 Mini Parable of the Householder (Matt 13:52-53)

A “scribe” (Matt 13:52) who copied God’s Word was instructed in God’s Word, and thus was able to explain God’s Word. He was like a householder “*which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old*” (Matt 13:52), i.e. he was able to bring out the freshness (not false theology) of God’s Word.

After these parables, Jesus “*departed thence*” (Matt 13:53).

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