

The Dragnet

The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

MATTHEW 13:47

Written by Bill Perkins

The Great Separation

We live in a world
where light and darkness
swim side by side.
Where the children of God
share water
with those who want nothing
to do with Him.
Where faithfulness and rebellion
move through the same currents,
and the Kingdom feels
mixed,
and polluted.
Yet Jesus never left us
wondering how the story ends.

You may not know this about Jesus,
He knew the ache
of living in a world
where the righteous and the wicked
move through the same waters.
So He gave a promise
to steady believers-
and to warn rejectors that
the mixture
won't last forever.

In one of His final parables
in Matthew 13,
He says the Kingdom
is like a net

let down into the sea
that gathers
every kind of fish.

And Jesus spoke
in the language of their world-
nets,
boats,
early-morning labor.

A shoreline at dawn.
Men gripping one end
of a long net-
three hundred feet
of rope, floats,
weighted mesh.

A boat rowing
parallel to the shore,
the rest of the net
sliding off the stern
like a curtain
sinking into the deep.

The boat arcs wide,
then returns to shore.

Two teams
a field apart.

The drag begins.

Ropes tighten.

Water churns.

Silver flashes.

Weeds twist.

Broken pottery clinks.

And when the bulging net
hits the beach,
the sorting begins-
slow,
careful,
perfect.

Good fish gathered in.

Bad fish set aside.

Jesus says
the Kingdom works like that.
For the faithful,
it's comfort:
you won't swim forever
in defiled waters.
For the drifting-
the promise that
the day of sorting is real,
and it will be just.

Where do I feel
the weight of this mixed world-
and how is Jesus calling me
to live in it?

I won't swim
in tainted waters forever.
The King will make all things pure.

Father, keep me pure in
these impure waters
until you make all things pure.
In Jesus' name. Amen.