

## SCRIPTURE READING FOR OCTOBER 23, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

Matthew 13:44-47  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

[Jesus told his disciples many parables in the house near the lake. He continued saying:]

<sup>44</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that somebody hid in a field, which someone else found and covered up. Full of joy, the finder *sold everything and bought that field.*

<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one very precious pearl, he went and *sold all that he owned and bought it.*

<sup>47</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a **net** that people threw into the lake and gathered *all kinds of fish.* <sup>48</sup> When it was *full*, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the GOOD FISH together into containers. But the BAD FISH they threw away. <sup>49</sup> That’s the way it will be at the end of the present age. The angels will go out and separate the evil people from the righteous people, <sup>50</sup> and will throw the evil ones into A BURNING FURNACE. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Matthew is one of the four gospels. Gospel means good news, it’s the title given to the four books in the Bible that tell the life, actions, and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It was composed in Greek, probably sometime after 70 CE, with evident dependence on the earlier Gospel According to Mark.

the kingdom of heaven: the Greek word here is (βασιλεία) pronounced “basileia” (from which we get the word basilica). It can be translated as kingdom, empire, reign and/or commonwealth. It refers both to a geographic / physical space and the authority of a ruler/leader. Walter Wink, a Christian theologian, highlighted that “basileia” is used in the New Testament to mean the new world order exemplified by the life of Jesus. Matthew uses the expression Kingdom of Heaven (the realm/home of God) versus the Kingdom of God (predominant in Mark and Luke).

is like:: the language here connects the three parables...they are stories or comparison and metaphor to be taken as a whole.

sold everything and bought that field:: both of the first two parables end with the expression of radical response and commitment that disrupts normal daily life with promises of a different way of living. The first parable is about someone who is completely surprised by what they find, whereas the second one is about a person who is looking for something, but finds it to be beyond their imagination.

**net**:: this image is used in the Hebrew Scriptures as a metaphor for an empire: for the Chaldeans in Habakkuk 1:15-17; for the power of Egypt in Isaiah 19:8 and Babylon in Ezekiel 26:5, 14.

all kinds of fish ... full :: notice the universal aspect of the net – it catches everything.

**GOOD / BAD FISH**:: this contrast harkens back to the parables of the weeds told just before our text in Matthew 13:24-30 [<sup>24</sup> Jesus put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed GOOD SEED in his field, <sup>25</sup> but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed WEEDS among the wheat and then went away.] and projects forward to the parable of the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:-44 [<sup>31</sup>When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and HE WILL SEPARATE PEOPLE ONE FROM ANOTHER AS A SHEPHERD SEPARATES THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the SHEEP at his right hand and the GOATS at the left.”

**A BURNING FURNACE**:: this is an image commonly used for judgment in the Hebrew Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

<sup>1</sup> Moses called out to all Israel, saying to them: "Israel! Listen to the regulations and the case laws that I'm recounting in your hearing right now. Learn them and carefully do them. <sup>2</sup> The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Mount Horeb. <sup>3</sup> The LORD didn't make this covenant with our ancestors but with us—all of us who are here and alive right now. <sup>4</sup> The LORD spoke with you face-to-face on the mountain from the very fire itself. <sup>5</sup> At that time, I was standing between the LORD and you, declaring to you the LORD's word, because you were terrified of the fire and didn't go up on the mountain."

The LORD said:...

<sup>12</sup> Keep the *Sabbath day* and treat it as **HOLY**, exactly as the Lord your God commanded: <sup>13</sup> Six days you may work and do all your tasks, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Don't do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your oxen or donkeys or any of your animals, or the immigrant who is living among you—so that your male and female servants can rest just like you. <sup>15</sup> Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, but the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That's why the Lord your God commands you to keep the Sabbath day.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:**

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- What do you hear Jesus saying about how we experience and respond the new world order exemplified by the life of Jesus?
- As you hear the sabbath commandment what do you hear? Are we to rest because God is holy?; because life is holy?; how does such rest invite us to realize that we (you) are **HOLY**: set apart for a specific purpose? How do you struggle to live such a "**HOLY**" life in your every day?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Deuteronomy is the fifth and last book of the Torah (in Judaism), where it is called Devarim (Hebrew: דְּבָרִים, literally meaning '[the] words [of Moses]') and the fifth book of the Christian Old Testament. It is mainly a series of three sermons delivered to the Israelites by Moses on the Plains of Moab, shortly before they enter the Promised Land. It's a reminder to the people of who they are and the God that they serve. Our section for today is a fourth commandment about the sabbath (told in 12-15).

*Sabbath day*: שַׁבָּת Pronounced (shab-bawth') means a weekly day of rest and stopping of work.

The Hebrew Scriptures give two reasons for this pause in work one) to remember that God rested on the 7th day after creating the world; and 2) because once the people of God were slaves in Egypt and were never allowed to rest under the reign of Pharaoh.

**HOLY**:: This is the name that Isaiah often gives to God in his poetry (as we say last week in Isaiah 6:1-12 – "Holy, holy, holy, Lord All-Powerful! The earth is filled with your glory." The word Holy in Hebrew is קֹדֶשׁ [pronounced /ko'-desh/ meaning that which is set apart, sacred, separated from that which isn't sacred/special/of God. For us the word often mean something more along the lines of "religious or morally good" - or even a self-righteousness in a negative holier than thou way. But that's not what the original meaning of the word is. As you read the text here we can wonder if the sabbath day is set apart for a specific purpose, and/or if the text is saying that the sabbath day empowers those who observe such radical rest to remember that they are set apart for a specific purpose.