

**What Believers Should Expect In This Present Age,
While God Is Trawling¹: Matthew 13:47-50**

Matthew is the book of the “King of the Jews”: Matthew 2:2; 25:34.

Matthew tells us what we can expect in this present age if we follow and serve the rejected King: Matthew 27:37; Luke 19:14

- I. You can expect to be a sower of the word of God in people's lives: 13:3-12

- II. You can expect mixed responses to the sowing of the word: 13:24-26, 36. Wheat and tares explained: vs. 37ff. Good sower, good seed, mixed crop: vs. 38,39.

- III. You can expect different degrees of fruitfulness in the good ground (receptive hearts): vs. 23. 100, 60, 30.

- IV. You can expect people to be “dull of hearing and blind” about things that matter the most: vs. 15.

This can be illustrated in many ways. The dagnet is perhaps the most sobering. There are three ways to fish: 1. hook and line 2. net casting 3. Dragnet fishing, that is ***Trawling***.

Trawl nets could be up to ½ mile long. Trawl nets have floats at the top, and weights at the bottom. One end of the net is attached to the shore. The other end is attached to a boat. This allows the net to sweep slowly through the water collecting everything in its path. The dragnet moves quietly. It catches everything: the living, the dead, the desirable fish, the repulsive fish.

¹ Trawl: A large, tapered fishing net which has floats at the top and weights at the bottom. It is towed along through the water reaching from the surface to the floor of the sea, depending on how deep the water is. The net moves through the water gathering nearly everything it comes into contact with.

When the net touches the back of a fish, the creature simply swims a little further ahead, enjoying what appears to be abundant freedom to live and move. Just so, men and women move in this world making an adjustment here, and another adjustment there, imagining that they are free to keep on living however they desire: coming, going, and moving about as they please.

In a sense they are free to do just that. However, even now, the dragnet of judgment is moving through the waters. Quietly it moves, unobservedly it moves: “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). **SEPARATION IS COMING**: Matthew 13:48-50.

Hell is coming for the bad fish. “...wailing and gnashing of teeth”: forever wanting different circumstances, yet unable to even want to repent. Glory is coming for the “good”: vs. 48.

Today the net is moving, **God is trawling**: “...in the dispensation of the fulness of the times He might gather together in one all things... according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:9-11).

“Have you understood these things?” vs. 51,52. The great fisher of men does not work alone: I Corinthians 9:22. The realities of the unseen world, especially the dragnet, shaped his decisions in this life. **We must not be dull drifters while the dragnet is closing.**

FACTS REGARDING SOWING THE SEED OF GOD'S WORD

I. All believers should be sowers.

- A. A church is a seed sowing agency.
- B. A preacher is a sower. But not just the preacher is a sower.
- C. Sheep produce sheep: to all the saints belongs “the work of the ministry”: Ephesians 4:12

II. To sow seed well we must possess the word and the word must possess us: 13:44-46. These are *fully persuaded finders*.

III. There are various ways of hearing the word of God without benefit.

A. **“The wayside”**: vs. 4. He is careless, thoughtless, utterly indifferent. The word is taken from them almost as fast as the words come to their ears. They go as they came, as if they heard nothing.

B. The **“stony ground”**: vs. 5 There is a noticeable response in the mouth, mind—some favorable feelings. There are no heart roots, the heart is not humbled or yielded. So what appeared to be a favorable reception “withered away”.

Many sermon hearers who seemed to gain some pleasure from public meetings will die lost, never having met the Lord: Ezekiel 33:31,32.

C. **“thorny ground”**: vs.7. There is favorable approval of the whole discourse yet no profit. The word is choked by a greater crop of cares, of pleasures, of worldly plans.

Here is one who likes the gospel, would like to have the results of the gospel, and yet lacks the will to put aside cares, pleasures, plans. He “believes” in that he knows it is true, yet he goes away uncommitted. Truly “the heart is deceitful above all things...”

D. **“good ground”**: vs. 8. There is only one evidence of hearing the word rightly. That evidence is to “bring forth fruit,” fruit of the Holy Spirit who inspired the word of God.

“And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (I Corinthians 13:13).

See also I John 2:4; 3:13,14

Ephesians 2:8,9 no boasting. Why not?