

Father John's Gospel Reflection



Gospel

GOSPEL – SUNDAY, 30 JULY, 2017

- Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Matt 13:44-47)

He sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

"Do you understand all these things?" They answered, "Yes." And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

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This is one of three kingdom parables presented to the disciples - all in the form of a riddle. Their message is simple enough - The Kingdom of God is at hand.

These parables are presented just to the disciples. They are being used by Jesus as a training exercise, as model gospel sermons. The previous four parables were given to an unbelieving seaside crowd.

Now, the disciples are told, the kingdom is at hand - the sinners are being separated from the saved, and now have to face the horror of eternal loss. This parable, as with all the other kingdom parables requires but one response, "repent and believe the gospel." Some commentators' interpretation is that the church represents the kingdom, and that its membership is made up of true and false believers, who will be separated at the last judgement and not before!

I think we are on safer ground, if like the parable of the weeds and wheat, we hold that it proclaims the immanence of the kingdom of God. Confronted by the coming kingdom, the unrighteous are even now being separated from the righteous - the day of judgment is upon us. Even now the angels are preparing to sift humanity, the righteous from the unrighteous, and the fire is already stoked. This day 'is at hand' so repent!

Fr John Boyd-Boland OFM

1. We learn about Jesus in a variety of ways - through family, friends, the church community, priests and teachers.
2. We are free to accept or reject the good news of Jesus - there is no compulsion to believe and accept Jesus. There is a powerful invitation to believe the Good News.
3. The images in the Gospel can't be used to support a theology of eternal damnation for those who don't accept Jesus, much less for those who have never been introduced to the Gospel.

Take home Message