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July 29, 2020

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“Every scribe is like ... a head of the household who brings from the storeroom both the new and the old” (Matt 13:47).

Jer 18:1-6; Matt 13:47-53

Jesus praises the householder who brings forth both old and new from his storeroom. It is an apt description of the evangelists who composed the Gospels from stories taken from both the collected sayings of Jesus and the stories and lessons in the

Hebrew scriptures. This also acknowledges the creativity of those who created the Lectionary, which elicits fresh insights by matching different texts for the daily readings.

Today we find paired Jeremiah's visit to the potter with Jesus' parable of the fishing net. Of note is the image of the potter who starts over after rejecting a clay vessel that does not turn out. He freely creates and recreates until he has achieved what he wants. Likewise, the fisherman sorts out the contents of the net to save some fish and discard others. Both the potter and the fisherman freely discern as they do their work.

Focusing on the Gospel, how do these images describe the Kingdom of God? For starters, it is a work in progress, not a perfect plan executed smoothly by design. It is process of learning and discovery, hit and miss, that requires judgment and patience. There is a saying that "perfection is the enemy of the good." If the fisherman only wanted a perfect catch, he would never go fishing. If the potter expected a perfect pot every time, she would quickly give up in frustration.

The Good News is that God blesses our efforts with the understanding that we will not always get it right. Life experiences can be good or bad, useful or a waste of time, but if we intend to live in this world we must cast our nets into the sea, our clay onto the wheel, and expect to learn from our failures and mistakes. The parable of the net is like the parables of the sower and the wheat and weeds. The Kingdom of God is messy business but blessed nonetheless if we simply try and keep learning.

Another life lesson is that wisdom comes only to those who make mistakes, for failure is the source of discernment and gradual adjustments until we succeed. Those who cannot admit error never learn anything, They proudly accumulate their mistakes until they are brought down in folly by reality and truth. The good steward of the treasures of the kingdom has a storeroom filled with failed experiments and false starts that taught him or her wisdom and humility.

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