

The Gospel According to
Matthew

Lesson #17 – Ch.14

Matthew 14:1-12 – Recounting the murder of John the Baptist

Matthew 14:13-21 – Jesus feeds 5,000 through a miracle

Matthew 14:22-33 – Jesus walks on water

Matthew 14:34-36 – Jesus heals many

Let's begin this lesson with prayer, but in this prayer time, reflect on what you have learned these past few weeks about the character of Jesus. Jot down a few words in the margins of this paper as you reflect on what the gospels have to say about Christ's character. What kind of man was He? Did He have a good work ethic? How did He respond to the needy? What was His prayer life like? How did He handle criticism? What seemed to matter to Him the most?

As you list His character traits, pray that the Lord would work these same traits in you. Does He want you to be more responsive to His Spirit's leading? Is He trying to teach you a healthy way to handle criticism? Do you need some "get away" time, away from the "multitudes"? Ask the Lord to help you see more than stories on the pages of your Bible. Ask Him to reveal to you biblical truths that can apply to the daily situations in life. Ask Him to mature your character, to make you look more like Jesus as you go forward in your experiences with Him.

Lord, give us insight into Your Word into things that we would miss apart from the help of Your Holy Spirit. Make Your Word relevant to us today. Help us to remember that our life counts, that what we do matters, and that others are watching us. Give us the same passion for the lost that Christ had. Move our hearts until the tears flow when we pray for those that are dead in their sins. Give us a compassion for the unbeliever struggling with no peace of mind. Help us to see them as sheep without a Shepherd like Jesus did.

Fill us with a continual gratefulness because we are underneath the umbrella of His care; we are chosen "Children of God" and "Sons and Daughters of the King."

Amen

One Solitary Life
(A description of Christ)

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled more than two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a Cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying – and that was

His coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Such was His human life- He raises from the dead.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the Centerpiece of the human race and the Leader of the column of progress. I am within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of a man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.” James C. Hefley

*Lord, use this life of Christ, this One Solitary Life, to transform the way we think, how we spend our time, how we view others, and what we do with our resources.
Make us like your Son, Jesus, Heavenly Father. Amen.*

Matthew 14:1-12 – Recounting the murder of John the Baptist

Who was Herod Antipas (the tetrarch)?

He was the son of Herod the Great, the one who slaughtered all the male children under the age of two to try and snuff out the Messiah (the King of the Jews). Tetrarch means ¼. He had 3 siblings and his father Herod gave each child one quarter of the territory to rule over after his death.

Herod Antipas was one of the co-conspirators who carried out the condemnation and execution of Jesus Christ. More than 30 years earlier, his father, Herod the Great, had tried but failed to murder the young Jesus by slaughtering all the boys under two years old in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16), but Joseph, Mary and Jesus had already fled to Egypt. Herod came from a family of political schemers. He used Jesus to gain favor with the Romans and the powerful Jewish council, the Sanhedrin.

Herod Antipas' Weaknesses

Herod was morally weak. He married Herodias, the ex-wife of his half-brother, Philip. When John the Baptist criticized Herod for this, Herod threw John in prison. Then, Herod gave in to the plot of Herodias and her daughter and had John beheaded (Matthew 14:6-11). However, the Jewish people loved John the Baptist and considered him a prophet. John's murder further alienated Herod from his subjects.

When Pontius Pilate sent Jesus to Herod for trial because Jesus was from Galilee, Herod was afraid of the chief priests and Sanhedrin. Rather than seeking the truth from Jesus, Herod wanted him to perform a miracle for his entertainment. Jesus would not comply. Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus. Then, instead of freeing this innocent man, Herod sent him back to Pilate, who had the authority to have Jesus crucified.

Herod's treachery improved his relationship with the chief priests and Sanhedrin and started a friendship with Pilate from that day forward.

After Emperor Tiberius died and was replaced by Caligula, Herod fell out of favor. He and Herodias were exiled to Gaul (France).



Please read Matthew 14:1-12 – Recounting the murder of John the Baptist

1. Looking back, what had King Herod done to John the Baptist and why (V.3-12)?

2. Why did King Herod fear John the Baptist (v.5)?

3. Why did King Herod believe that Jesus must have been John the Baptist raised from the dead? See Matt. 14:1-2; Luke 9:7-9.

I think King Herod was in distress because of his guilt from executing John the Baptist, and now he was afraid his spirit had come back for revenge. According to the Gospel of Luke, others were telling King Herod the same thing.

4. When Jesus hears of his beloved friend's fate (John's fate), what did Jesus immediately do (Matthew 14:13)?

John the Baptist was the first martyr to die for Christ, and Jesus loved him dearly. He tried to move out into a deserted place by himself after the news that John had died. Jesus knew it was John's devotion to Him that John lost his life for. I wonder if Jesus took this opportunity to share with the other disciples what it would cost *them* for committing their lives to following Him. Jesus would be the next to die, and then every disciple would eventually lay down his life for Him (except John the apostle, who would die in exile).

Jesus took His twelve beloved friends and went to a solitary place to grieve John's death and to be alone (at least they thought!).

5. Why did Jesus see the need for His disciples to get away and to be alone? Mark 6:31

If you are a young mom, I know you can relate to this statement: "There were so many coming and going that they didn't even have time to eat!" (v.31b). How many moms do I know that never eat a hot meal? How many overworked businessmen do I know that often have to skip lunch?

The disciples had been so busy with their calling to heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. that they had no time to rest. The needs were pressing in on them from all sides. Everybody needed something from them. Have you ever felt like that before?

When my children were small and every need was immediate because they couldn't do much for themselves, I remember evenings when I thought to myself, "If someone asks me to do one more thing, if someone asks me to meet one more need, I'm going to explode!"

There are seasons in life when demands are pressing, and other times when peace and rest are goals that seem to vanish into thin air like a vapor. Before we know it, it's another Monday and we wonder when we will ever be able to grab a few minutes for ourselves. We surmise that next week's schedule will be better, less demanding, and more restful. I've come to realize, like I'm sure the disciples did, that there are some seasons of life that are just like that. When we can't change them, we have to depend on God for the strength to enable us to bear through them with the power of His Spirit and make to us fruitful in what we are doing despite our weak and tired bodies.

6. Have the demands of life been pressing in hard on you lately? As one mother put it to me recently, “I feel like I’m just always treading water.” Do you feel the water rising and it’s all you can do to keep your head above water?

Share the challenges about your week with your group.

Experience the joy and camaraderie of at least knowing others are treading the same flood waters! It’s amazing how it will bring you hope!

7. Did Jesus and His disciples get their rest time? Why (Mark 6:33)?

8. How long did they have to work to meet the needs of others (Mark 6:35)?

9. Mark tells us in Mark 6:33 that these people “*knew*” Him and ran to meet Him there on foot! What do you suppose they *knew* about Him that would cause them to run and not just walk to be where Jesus was? See John 6:2.

God gave the disciples enough grace at the time that they needed it to care for those that the Lord had placed under their care. He will do that for you too. Your schedule may not be something you can handle forever, but until God changes things, He will equip you to handle it.

10. Jesus comes out and sees this great multitude and is instantly filled with what (Matthew 14:14)?

Were these people well? What were they in need of? What *moved* the heart of Christ (Luke 9:11)?

God loves people so much that He can’t stand by and not be moved by their sickness and frailties. His love for us is greater than any human love you have ever experienced, greater than any love a mother or father has for their child- and you know how much parents love their babies!

I heard someone say, “If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on the front door of it. If God had a wallet, your picture would be in the front slot of the billfold. If God owned a home, your picture would line the halls in beautiful frames; it would sit on the fireplace mantel where all could see **how proud** He was to call **you** His daughter/son.” God LOVES His children, and everything He does is born out of that love for them. He loves the well, He loves the sick, He loves the frail, He loves the strong, He loves the desperate; He just loves mankind.

11. Let’s take some time to reflect upon God’s love for us.

Look up these verses and write them out in the spaces provided, but listen to the words as you write.

Don’t be as intent on filling in the answer as you are on hearing the descriptive words of God’s love for you.

Write out each verse.

Choose one as your verse for the week!

a. Deuteronomy 7:6-8a

b. Jeremiah 31:3-4

c. Romans 5:8

d. Psalm 8:4-9

According to Psalm 8:6, we have dominion over everything on earth. He has entrusted us with the care of His creation, but the One who cares for *us* is the Lord. He is the Shepherd over His people. He loves people so much that He wouldn't entrust their care to anyone else but Himself!

Even though Jesus and His disciples were exhausted from ministry coupled with the fact that their hearts were heavy from the death of their dear friend John the Baptist, even though they longed to be alone so that they could grieve, they came and ministered to this great multitude of desperate, needy people.

12. Why did Jesus in particular have great compassion on these needy people (Mark 6:34)?

Jesus couldn't stand to see the needs of the multitude go unmet; no matter how physically tired He and His disciples were, they served them. His Shepherd's heart couldn't rest until all their needs were met, until the "*sheep*" were out of danger and could rest in a place of peace.

As a parent, I can relate to this "shepherd's heart". We parents have little ones that are entrusted into our care. A good parent could no more go to sleep when a child comes to them with an injury than a Shepherd could lie down to rest when one of his sheep is in danger or found wounded. A good Shepherd (or parent) would die before they would ignore the cries of their child. Jesus couldn't ignore the needs of the multitude that ran to meet Him, no matter how inconvenient their timing was. He loves, loves, loves...

13. The True Shepherd provides for every need in the life of every believer.

Read the description of the True Shepherd (which is the Lord) in Ezekiel 34:11-31.

List at least 10 things you discover in these verses that the True shepherd does for His sheep (you and I).

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

a. Out of all the benefits of having our Shepherd care for us, which provision is your favorite right now?

Let's return to Matthew 14:14. Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitude. He began to heal their sick.

14. When you think of the word "compassionate", who comes to mind and why?

15. Here are some synonyms for the word "compassionate". Think of your relationship with the Lord; think about how He dealt with the multitudes around Galilee. Do you see all these characteristics in Him? Have you seen Him treat you with the same care?

Sympathy	Consideration
Concern	Care
Kindness	

An Antonym (the opposite) would be "coldness".

Sometimes Christians can be accused of being "cold" or "unkind" because we haven't met the needs of others when they are the neediest. Often it's because we are busy trying to meet other obligations, or it may be due to being insensitive at the moment and not recognizing the pain present. I know most of us are truly considerate people, but with our busy schedules, we can miss the mark and overlook an opportunity for ministry if we aren't truly seeking God in our day. We can have an injured "sheep" walk right by us and not see the need or extend a hand of mercy, or offer a word of encouragement.

The Lord wants His church to be a compassionate church. He wants us to be considerate, kind, and caring toward one another, even at the most inconvenient times.

16. In their weariness, what suggestion did the disciples offer Jesus? What did they encourage Jesus to do with all the hungry people (Matthew 14:15)?

17. The gospel of John gives us a little more insight to this story. In John 6:5-9, Jesus asked Philip the question, "Where shall we buy enough bread that these may eat?" Why did Jesus ask Philip that question?

Do you think Jesus ever puts us in positions of need to test our faith? _____

Maybe Jesus knew that Philip personally needed to try and solve this problem in his own power and then experience a miracle from the Messiah in order to grow his faith. For whatever reason that only Jesus knows, He pointed Philip out and then performed one of the most famous miracles in the New Testament.

Are you in a position of need today? _____

Can you imagine it could have been God that allowed you to be there? _____

Can you put into words what you are learning about God at this time?

After all the miracles that Jesus had done that the disciples were witness to over the past few years, you'd think that they would have thought of asking Jesus to supernaturally provide enough food for the crowd. It's easy for us to say as we sit here reading our Bibles some 2,000 years later, but, I mean, I think I would have asked Jesus for some medium rare tri-tip, corn on the cob, and some sour dough rolls, and enough to feed all five thousand, please!

By the way, most commentators believe that if there were 5,000 men in this multitude, there was probably around 25,000 people total including women and children. That would be like you and a few friends trying to feed dinner to everyone at the Bakersfield College Football Stadium with five loaves of bread and two small fish! (And the two fish weren't even large enough to be keepers!)

I can see myself in the response of the disciples. The task seemed too big. The first thing they did was to look to their own human resources to meet the need. The crowd was huge, and what they had in their lunch sack was about enough for two adult meals. How could Jesus possibly use them successfully when they seemed to lack the proper resources?

18. *When was the last time Jesus asked you to meet a need and you were afraid you wouldn't be successful? Did He supply you with everything you needed? Share with your group.*

At times, our spiritual senses become dull and we have no faith for the power of the supernatural, but we should count on it! God loves to show up and blow our minds by doing something so out of the ordinary that we have to give Him praise and glory! He grows in power in our minds and our faith strengthens. He will not share His glory with another.

19. Jesus was teaching the disciples about faith, compassion, and the essence of real servanthood. They were called to serve these people even though many of them were still unbelievers who were fickle and undeserving. Jesus met every need even though He knew many of them would get what they needed, lose interest, and move on.

The big lesson here was for the disciples to learn to trust God for what looked like an impossible situation. He loves to use us and our little resources to magnify His power.

John McArthur's comment on this section of Scripture is great. He said, "As the song goes, 'Little becomes much in the Master's hand.' God used a baby's cry to move the heart of Pharaoh's daughter and a shepherd's crook to work mighty miracles in Egypt. He used a boy and his slingshot to slay the giant, Goliath. He used Balaam's donkey to teach His truth and the jawbone of a donkey to slay a thousand men. He used a little child to teach His disciples humility, and He used one boy's lunch to feed twenty-five thousand people!"

a. Why does God display His supernatural power through weakness?

Exodus 9:16

Exodus 9:25-29

Exodus 13:14-16

Exodus 14:30-31

20. Jesus fed all who were hungry that day. What was left from the feasting (Matthew 14:20)? _____

This is a good reminder that Jesus' provision in our lives is always more than enough. He is the supplier of all our needs, and all that is in heaven and earth is His. He will orchestrate His supply in order to bring you the provision you need at the time you need it!

The Habit of Recognizing God's Provision by Oswald Chambers

We are made "partakers of the divine nature," receiving and sharing God's own nature through His promises. Then we have to work that divine nature into our human nature by developing godly habits. The first habit to develop is the habit of recognizing God's provision for us. We say, however, "Oh, I can't afford it." One of the worst lies is wrapped up in that statement. We talk as if our heavenly Father has cut us off without a penny! We think it is a sign of true humility to say at the end of the day, "Well, I just barely got by today, but it was a severe struggle." And yet all of Almighty God is ours in the Lord Jesus! And He will reach to the last grain of sand and the remotest star to bless us if we will only obey Him. Does it really matter that our circumstances are difficult? Why shouldn't they be! If we give way to self-pity and indulge in the luxury of misery, we remove God's riches from our lives and hinder others from entering into His provision. No sin is worse than the sin of self-pity, because it removes God from the throne of our lives, replacing Him with our own self-interests. It causes us to open our mouths only to complain, and we simply become spiritual sponges— always absorbing, never giving, and never being satisfied. And there is nothing lovely or generous about our lives. Before God becomes satisfied with us, He will take everything of our so-called wealth, until we learn that He is our Source; as the psalmist said, "All my springs are in You" ([Psalm 87:7](#)). If the majesty, grace, and power of God are not being exhibited in us, God holds us responsible. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you... may have an abundance..." ([2 Corinthians 9:8](#))— then learn to lavish the grace of God on others, generously giving of yourself. Be marked and identified with God's nature, and His blessing will flow through you all the time.

Matthew 14:22-33 – Jesus walks on water



Please read Matthew 14:22-33

After every person was fed and every need was met, Jesus sent His disciples away in a boat. He sent the multitudes home, and He went off to pray alone.

The disciples ran into trouble! There they were, out on the sea, and a storm arises. Matthew says the waves and wind were contrary (Matt.14:24). Mark states that Jesus could see them straining and rowing, but the wind was against them (Mark 6:48). John tells us that it was dark, and they had rowed out about three or four miles when the storm arose (John 6:17-19).

Did you notice the fact that Mark said Jesus could see them rowing against the wind, when John stated that they were at least three or four miles out to sea? This is just a little proof that Jesus was God in the flesh. He could see as God sees.

Even though Jesus could see the disciples struggling, He waited until the “fourth watch” and then came to them. The Jewish night was divided into four shifts. 6pm – 9pm, 9pm – 12am, 12am – 3am, and 3am – 6am. This means that Jesus let them struggle against the storm all night long! He came to them just before dawn.

21. There are other times in Scripture that we find the Lord *waiting* to come to our rescue. I believe that He often waits until we have exhausted all our human resources. He waited until the disciples had come to that place of extreme need. They were mentally and physically spent. They were DONE!

Search these Scriptures and tell us what insight you find about waiting on God and why He causes us to wait at times:

a. John 11:1-6; 15

b. Isaiah 30:18

c. Isaiah 64:4

I get the distinct impression from these Scriptures that God is more interested in our godly character of faith than in our immediate comfort. He in His infinite wisdom always looks to the good of the bigger picture.

Notice this - Jesus might have waited to calm the storm, but He spoke to their fear immediately!

Spurgeon says, “We may tremble upon the ROCK, but the ROCK (which is Christ) never trembles under us!”

Jesus never meant for us to live in fear and anxiety. That is a need He comes quick to rescue us from! His Spirit is your guide and continual helper.

2. When Jesus begins to walk on water, the disciples freaked. They thought they were seeing a ghost! What did Jesus quickly say to diminish their overwhelming fear (Matthew 14:27)?

They all cried out with fear, but it was *Peter* that wanted to jump out of the boat and go meet Jesus on the water! Oh, Peter! You would do something like that! Such a man of action.

Peter's faith was enough to get him out of the boat, but it wasn't enough to carry him across the water (Matt. 14:30-31). Our faith, like Peter's, is strengthened when we take risks for Christ, and He meets us there and makes our steps of faith succeed. The first steps of success are found when we through faith get out of the boat and place our feet on the water.

3. Isaiah 41:10 says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

I should be convinced that if God could gather up the seas with His hands like He did in creation (Gen. 1:9), then He should be perfectly capable of holding up little ol' me, right? Why do we doubt that He can handle us and all those whom we love? _____

4. What happened when Jesus and Peter got back into the boat (Matthew 14:32)?

5. What was the reaction of the disciples who stayed in the boat (Matthew 14:33)?

I would have assumed that they already knew that Jesus was the Son of God, but evidently they still had some doubt in their hearts, even after all they had witnessed and been a part of. Mark gives us a clue to why they still harbored doubt in their hearts.

6. Why did they still have doubts (Mark 6:52)?

Somehow they had missed *the glory* of the previous miracle! They saw it with their own eyes and they were even amazed at it, but when it came to the next crisis, they still doubted Christ. Aren't we just like that? God can do a huge miracle in our lives, He can answer prayer in some amazing ways and then months later, when we enter a new trial, our faith wavers! We believe that this new experience is *the one* that Christ will be unable to conquer! It is the one prayer request with impossible odds. You know, this problem will always be my problem, but miracles are God's specialty. No human heart is too hard that God cannot soften it, no will too obstinate that God cannot break it.

Jesus heals many – Matthew 14:34-36



Please read Matthew 14:34-36

When they cross over the raging sea, Jesus and His disciples come to the land of Gennesaret. As soon as He was recognized there, they brought to Him all who needed healing.

It's interesting that Matthew makes the statement in Matthew 14:36, "and begged Him that they might only _____". And as many that touched it were made perfectly well."

Do you think they might have heard the story of Jesus healing the woman with the flow of blood? Remember in Matthew 9:20, the woman believed all she had to do was touch the hem of His garment and she would be made well? I wonder if this miracle preceded Christ to this Gennesaret.

“God is committed to protecting His glory, even from a dearly loved powerfully used child.” -Beth Moore

The disciples had seen so much, done so much, been a part of the Savior’s miracles, and had even cast out demons in Jesus’ name. They were tools of God’s holy, miracle-working power, BUT God still protects His glory. He is holy and will not share His glory with any human.

Jesus continually revealed Himself to the disciples, and they recognized their lack of faith and their constant need for Him. They became more and more dependent the more they got to know the Savior. This too should be our road. We should become more dependent upon scripture and Jesus Christ the deeper we go with Him. The more you know about the Savior, the more you realize that you need more of Jesus and less of yourself!

Wrapping it up and making it personal

One of the most evident things about this chapter in Matthew is the compassion of Jesus Christ. He cares so deeply about people.

I wonder if we have lost some of our compassion for others. I often have to *pray* that the Holy Spirit would give me a love and care for His people. It doesn’t always come naturally because selfishness resides at the center of my heart.

On any given day I could be more concerned about my stuff before your stuff. That’s the way of the flesh! In order for me to think like Jesus thought, I have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I have to pray for a heart like Christ’s. When He anoints me with deep concern and passion for others and their needs, I know it is a work of the Lord. When I am able to put others’ needs above my own, I know it is a work of the Lord. When I’m dog tired and yet willing to meet the needs of a hurting saint, I know it is the work of the Lord!

Work in us, Lord, that we we may have a deeper compassion for the weak, the less fortunate, the lonely, and the ones in emotional pain. Give us the heart of Christ, that will subdue our own need and go to any length to meet the needs of another.

I will close with a story that elevates this point. Sometimes we just need to place ourselves in the position of the hurting in order to bring about humility, understanding, and compassion.

The Grandfather’s Table

A frail old man went to live with his son David, his wife, and their four-year-old grandson. The old man’s hands trembled, his eyesight was bad, and he faltered with every step. The family ate together at the table, but the elderly grandfather’s hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon, and many times most of what he was eating ended up on the floor. The son became irritated with the mess. Therefore, the couple put a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family ate at the dining room table. Since the Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was

served in a wooden bowl. Every once in awhile as they glanced in Grandfather's direction, they could catch a glimpse of a tear in his eye as he sat at his table in the corner. The words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled a glass of milk. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed the boy playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" The boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and mama for when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words of the four-year-old penetrated their hearts so deeply that they were speechless. Though no words were spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took the Grandfather and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer about spilled milk or a mess on the floor.

This couple's compassion was restored when they pictured themselves in the Grandfather's situation. Pray that you would have eyes to see like Christ sees and hearts that feel what He feels towards the less fortunate this week. It will change the way you respond to others.

Be blessed!