

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 10/11-12/2021 *Matthew Chapter 14*

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS107, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

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OPENING PRAYER

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: The Gospel According to Matthew! *Matthew Chapter 14*

John the Baptist Beheaded – (vs. 1-12);

Feeding the Five thousand – (vs. 13-21);

Jesus Walks on the Sea – (vs. 22-33);

Many Touch Him and are Made Well – (vs. 34-36)

THEME OF Chapter 14: The forerunner, John the Baptist, is beheaded. Jesus withdraws, but is followed by the multitude. He feeds the five thousand and sends His disciples over the sea into a storm. Then He walks on the water to them. The movement in Matthew of the rejection of Jesus as King and His conflict with the religious rulers continues. This chapter reveals that events are moving to a crisis. John the Baptist is slain on the pretext that Herod must keep his oath. This is an overt act of antagonism toward light and right which

must ultimately lay wicked hands on Jesus. Jesus withdraws in order not to force the wicked hand of Herod, for the hour of Jesus has not yet come. The feeding of the five thousand is certainly the most important of the miracles of Jesus if we are to judge by the attention given to it by the Gospel writers. It is the only miracle recorded by all the Gospel writers.

The three events in this chapter illustrate the characteristics of this present age, when the King is rejected:

Persecution (*Mat 14:1-12*): Christ's servants will suffer and die for Him

Provision (*Mat 14:13-21*): Christ's servants will minister the bread of life to man

Protection (*Mat 14:22-36*): Christ will pray for His servants and rescue them.

The Death of John the Baptist

Mat 14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus

Mat 14:2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

- **The tetrarch means the ruler of a fourth part.** He was also known as Herod Antipas. This Herod was a son of Herod the Great.
- **When Herod received news of Jesus,** the miracles that Jesus was performing, his thought was this must be John the Baptist, resurrected from the dead, which was why he was able to do these marvelous miracles.
- **Verses 3-12 are sort of a parenthetical insertion of a little historic sketch, dealing with the death of John the Baptist.** Verse two really picks up again in verse thirteen, so it may read like this. (*Mat 14:1, 2, 13*) *At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus [2] and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." [13] When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.*
- **That is when Jesus heard that King Herod had become apprised of Him, and of His ministry.** Jesus departed to go over to the deserted area on the other side of the sea, realizing that Herod, having killed John, was no friend and would perhaps seek the life of Himself. Jesus came to give His life, but not at the edict of Herod. He was to give His life at the edict of the Father, in Jerusalem, not in the Galilee region. From now on, the ministry of Jesus will not so much be concentrated around Capernaum as was His early ministry but will include different areas not under Herod's jurisdiction.
- **Herod was wanting to see Jesus. Having heard of Him, he had a curiosity.** He wanted to see some miracles. He finally met Jesus when Jesus was being tried by Pilate, who was seeking to escape making a judgment on Jesus and had sent Him to Herod for judgment and let that injustice be upon Herod, rather than upon Pilate. When Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, Herod was excited, he was hoping that Jesus would perform some kind of miracle for him.
- **When Jesus met Herod, He had absolutely nothing to say to him.** Not a word. Herod's soldiers mocked Jesus, made fun of Him and all, but Jesus did not respond. He did not answer. He had no word for this man at all.
- **How tragic it is when a man is so desolate that Jesus does not have any word for him whatsoever.** Such was the case of Herod Antipas. Now coming back, we look at the story of the death of John the Baptist under Herod Antipas.

Mat 14:3 For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Mat 14:4 Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

- **Herod was made the tetrarch,** a ruler over the Galilean region at the death of his father, Herod the great. Herod, then, being married to the King of Petra's daughter, went to Rome to visit his half-brother, Philip. While, in Rome, he fell in love with his brother's wife, Herodias. He enticed her to return with him to become his wife. He divorced his wife. Herodias was ambitious. She returned with him, but then she began to pressure him to go to Rome in order that he might get the title of king, so she could have the title as queen. She talked him to going to Caligula, the Roman emperor, in order that they might bestow upon him the title of king. However, his brother, Agrippa, had sent a message to Caligula declaring that Herod Antipas was planning to rebel against the Roman authority. Caligula believed him so that when Herod Antipas and Herodias arrived, he ordered Herod Antipas banished to Gaul, that all of the riches, which were much, be taken from him. Caligula said to Herodias that she could keep her riches and could live in Rome. She insisted on going with her husband into

banishment and did go and that was the end of his reign.

- **Herodias hated John the Baptist!** When Herod Antipas came back with Herodias, John the Baptist spoke out against it. Herod rebuked him. He said that is not right, you should not have her as your wife, making Herodias angry. She saw red. She wanted his blood spilled because he had spoken against this adulterous relationship. Herod had laid hold on John, bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake. We notice how Herod was influenced by others. Here it is by Herodias, and later on it will be by others. Everything he did was to gain the approval of others.

Mat 14:5 *And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.. (Rom 2:29b) whose praise is not from men but from God.*

- **He feared the multitude!** Herod was afraid of the crowd. Like many today, they fear man's opinion before fearing God. The only thing that kept Herod from even greater wickedness was the fear of the people, who considered John to be a prophet. It seems, however, Herod feared Herodias the most of all as he imprisoned John *for the sake of Herodias*. She ruled him at her pleasure, reminding us of Jezebel ruling Ahab.

Mat 14:6 *But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.*

- **The daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.** Those oriental dances were very sensual, very seductive type of dances. It was unthinkable that a young girl the daughter of the wife of the Roman governor would dance like that. Dances like this were usually done by prostitutes, but on his birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them *and pleased Herod*.

Mat 14:7 *Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.*

- **No doubt, it was a drunken party.** She comes out and dances this very seductive dance. He is moved. Most likely under the influence of the alcohol, he takes an oath, I swear by heaven, ask whatever you want I'll give it to you." He probably expected her to ask for some material thing, something within reason.

Mat 14:8 *So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."*

- **The mother, Herodias, lived up to the Herod name.** Her request was cruel and sadistic, prompted by a brutal desire for revenge because of John's condemnation of her. She had likely planned this for some time, knowing Herod. She could get John's death, which she wanted, this way.

Mat 14:9 *And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her.*

- **Because of the oaths.** A promise made with a certain oath was considered sacred and not to be broken, especially when made by a ruling monarch. Herod was widely known for his deceitfulness and double dealing. He was not so concerned with honesty but rather with the appearance of things. He did not want to be embarrassed in front of his dinner guests.
- **And because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her:** Because Herod was afraid to go against his wife or to lose face before his friends, he did something that he knew was wrong. Imagine a man being motivated like that! He was afraid of what his guests might think of him for having made a promise and not making it good.

Mat 14:10 *So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.*

Mat 14:11 *And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.*

- **The sadistic, sad, and sordid account of what took place in that day** reveals the type of society that existed then. John the Baptist was beheaded, and his head was given to the dancing girl on a platter! Human nature has not changed much. Lust and murder are still a part of contemporary society today.
- **John the Baptist was beheaded.** His voice was silenced. That burning and shining light was extinguished. That prophet, that Elijah, of the new Testament, became a sacrifice to the resentments of an imperious, whorish woman. He who was great in the sight of the Lord, *died as a fool dies. His hands were bound, and his feet put into fetters. As a man falls before wicked men*, so he fell, a true martyr! Dying not for the professions of his faith, yet for the performance of his duty. However, though his work was *done and his testimony finished*, God brought this good out of it. His disciples, who while he lived, though in prison, kept close to him, now after his death heartily closed with Jesus Christ!

- **A lesson for us! Looking at what led up to Herod's decision making and action!** Herod had a guilty conscience, regretting what he has done. Several practical things we must stay away from, less we go down that path that Herod did. Here are four main things we must avoid!
- **Drunkenness.** Nobody make good or righteous decisions when they are drunk. There is a profound linkage between drunkenness and sexual immorality and drunkenness.
- **Lust** brought inflamed by a very sensual dance. Acting on lust always lead to deep regret! We must turn away from lust inflaming situations or bad decisions will always result.
- **Peer pressure!** Decisions based on the powerful influence of peer pressure rather than the principle of right and wrong. Herod knew that it was wrong to kill John. He understood that clearly, but in order to save face of other people, he did so! This is especially present for the youth, but it is present for all of us. Are you looking for approval of peers or for the Rapture and being with Jesus? What does His word say here and not the pressure from the peers around me?
- **The inability to admit that you are wrong!** To quickly admit you did a dumb thing, but now I want to do the right thing. "God allows U Turns (repentance)!" Even as Christians, we need to rather regularly take U turns. Do you have a problem with simply admitting that you were wrong, when you are? If so, that is just a recipe for disaster. If I dig in on a wrong decision, I can never make a wrong decision, right! Admit, confessing to God, that my decision and action was wrong! Repent and turn from it! Turn to and be obedient to His Word!

Mat 14:12 *Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*

- The disciples of John claimed his body and tenderly and lovingly *buried the body*. They brought the news in tears to our Lord Jesus. The disciples of John had fasted often while their master was in prison. Their bridegroom was taken away from them. They prayed earnestly for his deliverance, as the church did for Peter's. They had free access to him in prison, which was a comfort to them, but they wished to see him at liberty, that he might preach to others; but now on a sudden all their hopes are dashed. Disciples weep and lament, when the world rejoices.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Mat 14:13 *When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. (Mar 6:31) And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.*

- **When Jesus heard it.** Jesus suggested that they go over to the other side of the sea and Mark's gospel tells us that it was to rest, to just have some time together, to sort of sit down and more or less, just to just reflect on what's happening and to lay out plans for the future. They went over to this other side to this deserted area,
- **They followed him on foot out of their cities.** The people began to jog around the upper part of the sea of Galilee. As they were jogging around, people going through the villages, they say, What is happening, where are you going? Jesus is going to land over here. More and more people joined them. By the time Jesus landed with His disciples, there were 5,000 men beside women and children waiting for Him. Now when you are trying to get a rest and get alone away, that is not too pleasant a thing to have 5,000 men plus the women and children waiting for you to arrive! How would you and I have responded to this huge crowd, when so wanting to get away and rest a bit?

Mat 14:14 *And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

- **Jesus, moved with compassion!** They were going away for rest, but it did not work. They beat Him there. They met Him when He arrived. But rather than being upset, irritated, angry, grumbling like we might, *Jesus was moved with compassion.* Mark's gospel said (**Mar 6:34b**) *because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.* His heart was moved. He saw their hunger. He saw their need. He began to minister to them, healing the sick that they had brought with them. Oh, the tender love and compassion of the Lord! How often when we are tired and have our own plans for rest, that we are out of reach, out of touch, to care about others. Not so with Jesus. He was never too busy, too important to take time with common people. Moved with compassion, He healed their sick.

Mat 14:15 *When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."*

- We see the disciples are attempting to advise Jesus what to do. Lord, it is getting late. Their advice was to send the people into the villages nearby to get some food.

Mat 14:16 *But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."*

- **The feeding of the five thousand is the one miracle** which is recorded in all four Gospels. For that reason alone it is an important miracle. Can you imagine what they must have felt at that point? Five thousand men plus the woman and children which were not numbered, Jesus said. feed them! It was an impossible command.

Mat 14:17 *And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."*

- **Having only five loaves and two fishes is typical of the sad state of the church** in our day. Right now people are saying that we need to send the multitudes away, that there are natural ways of caring for their needs. We send them to the psychiatrist for emotional help and to the government for physical relief. We do have spiritual bread to offer people, although it may be only five loaves and two fishes, but the thing which is lacking is the power of the Lord Jesus. If we only had that power, we wouldn't need to send the multitudes away. We fail to realize that the solutions today are not in government nor in human imaginations but in God. It is no wonder the church is so powerless.

Mat 14:18 *He said, "Bring them here to Me."*

- **That is a wonderful response!** He is the Lord. He says to us, **Bring them here to Me.** It is not what we have that counts with Him, but actually what we don't have. The question is: Are we willing to give Him whatever we do have and let Him be the One to direct us in the use of it?
- **We are not to get the impression that this little boy had five great big loaves of bread.** They probably just little buns. There were over five thousand hungry people out there, and they had five little buns. This little boy had brought them for his lunch. He could have eaten every bit of it. Five loaves and two small fish! Jesus said, **Bring them here to Me**

Mat 14:19 *Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.*

- **What an interesting picture this is!** He gives to the disciples and the disciples in turn give to the multitude. That is the way it seems that God has provided bread for His children. Paul the apostle said, **(1Co 15:3a)** *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: I like to, in my own heart, preface that every time I stand before you, having been waiting upon the Lord, opening my heart to the Spirit and the instruction of the Spirit to my heart of the Word, to say that which I have received from the Lord I also deliver to you!* He gave to His disciples, and they distributed it to the people. As the Lord gives to us, we are to be as the disciples. We are to be like waiters passing it out to others.

Mat 14:20 *So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.*

- **They all ate and were filled.** The word "filled" in the Greek is gluttony, like when we push ourselves away from the Thanksgiving table, wishing we had not taken that desert, but had waited till later. You are so full, you are miserable. They all ate and were filled! Most people in that day never knew what it was to have a full meal, but twelve baskets of food left over indicates that everyone had a full tummy.

Mat 14:21 *Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.*

- **What a remarkable miracle!** There were five thousand men. This did not include the women and children. Is it too much to add one woman and one child to each man? The Lord actually fed closer to fifteen thousand than to five thousand people that day!
- **The people wanted to make Him King!** In **(Joh 6:15)** *Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.* He had fed them. He had satisfied their material needs. On that basis, they are wanting to make Him king, but He passed through them. This is a critical time because it was premature. His being presented to the nation as their king was down the road a little ways. This was a premature attempt by the people, and probably hoping to claim Him as the king and just start moving towards Jerusalem, wiping out the Romans and establishing the kingdom. But He would not allow it, that of trying to make Him the king on the wrong basis, the basis of material things rather than spiritual

things. He has to be king in our hearts, in our spirits.

Jesus Walks on the Water

Mat 14:22 *Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.*

- **Immediately, Jesus insisted that His disciples do that!** I am going to send the multitude away, but you fellows take off. Get in the boat and go over to the other side! I will dismiss the multitude. The disciples took off in the boat to go back over to the other side, to the area of Capernaum, Magdala, that area is called Gennesaret on the other side. We need to remember that the disciples were in the perfect will of God as they followed His instructions. I can imagine they thought, in being obedient, they would have a smooth and quick trip! But notice, even in His perfect will, we will experience storms, even very severe storms!

Mat 14:23 *And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.*

- **Solitude with the Father. Things are beginning to come to a head.** His fame has now reached Herod, Herod is wanting to see Him, wanting to meet Him. Jesus had sent a message to Herod through the Pharisees, “Go tell that fox that I’m going to do my work today and tomorrow.” Yet, here are the crowds, the multitudes, their premature attempt to make Him the king. It has been a busy, busy day. How does Jesus spend the night? In prayer, praying!
- **For us, we would probably say, Man, let’s get to bed early and just sleep!** Let us just sack out! It has been a tough day! But instead, He is there gaining strength as He communes, alone, with the Father.
- **Notice Jesus’ example!** Though He had so much work to do with others, yet He chose sometimes to be alone! Christ’s true followers so look forward to being alone with Him. They cannot enjoy themselves in solitude, when they have no one else to converse with, none else to enjoy, but God and their own hearts! What about you? About me?

Mat 14:24 *But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. (Mar 6:47-48) Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.*

- **The wind usually comes from the coastal area to the Dead Sea** which is six hundred feet below sea level. or to the area of the sea of Galilee. So going from Bethsaida over to Capernaum, you would be going against the prevailing winds. When the winds really kick up, they can kick up wind waves on the sea of Galilee, causing it to become quite choppy. Thus, to row against the wind, against that sea chop can be a very difficult thing, especially if there is any intensity in the wind. That was the case. It was probably a time of full moon because we read in another gospel that from where Jesus was sitting there on the mountainside, He could see them out there in the middle of the sea toiling. Full bright moon and you could see the choppy seas and the silhouette of the little boat as it was bouncing and being tossed about.
- **The Lord is in the mountains, in the place of prayer.** The disciples are down on the Sea of Galilee in a storm and in darkness. They are in the place of danger. What a picture this is of our own day. Our Lord has gone on to the Father and is seated at the Father’s right hand. We today are down here on a storm-tossed sea in the place of peril!
- **Though the wind was contrary, and they were tossed with waves,** yet being ordered by their Master to the other side, they did not turn back, but made the best of their way forward. We need to remember this. Though troubles and difficulties may disturb us in our duty, they must not drive us from it; but through the midst of them we must press forwards.

Mat 14:25 *Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.*

- **At that time, it was after three in the morning, when Jesus came to them.** It was the fourth watch. The first watch is from six to nine in the evening; the second from nine to twelve; the third watch is from twelve to three and the fourth watch is from three to six. The four watches during the night. Jesus came to them in the fourth watch, so sometime after three o’clock. In the moonlight you could see the little boat out there in the midst of the sea, being tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary,

- **The disciples are in this situation because Jesus constrained them to be there.** They are safer in the storm that they were with the wrong impression of who Jesus was. They are learning the lessons here that we are all learning. It's the last watch. Sometimes the storm is there. As we look at the world and see what is happening, some of us are tortured. Rowing, straining, sore and worn out! Jesus is putting some things before us. They have been constrained by Him to be in the situation they are in. It says in the fourth watch, Jesus went to them, walking on the sea

Mat 14:26 *And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled (terrified), saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.*

- **Now here are seasoned seamen, mature men but they've been struggling.** It has been a hard day! It has been a long night. They are not getting anywhere and suddenly they see someone walking on the water to their boat. Their assumption is that it is a ghost!

Mat 14:27 *But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."*

- **Dispelling their fear, Jesus immediately said do not be afraid, it is I!** Immediately, He reassured them that He was no ghost!
- **Be of good cheer!** Jesus uses this term eight times in the Bible. He said to Paul in Jerusalem, when he unsuccessfully witnessed to the Jews, *(Act 23:11) But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*
- **How their fears were silenced!** Nothing needs be a terror to those that have Christ near them, and know that He is theirs! No, not even death itself. Are you fearful? Are your fears silenced right now?

Mat 14:28 *And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."*

- **Interesting! Peter, here he goes again! He is a great guy.** I love it when a person is daring. He is willing to do anything. A go-for-it kind of guy. *Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."*
- **Many times, there are people find fault with Peter.** I love him. There is a lot in Peter with which I can identify. I admire him for stepping out. There are people who are afraid to do anything. They are the people that never accomplish anything. If you are afraid of failure or taking risks, you will never do anything. Life is risky, but we are taking risks all the time. Why not take a risk for Jesus? Peter was willing to do that. Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.
- **William Carey said, "Expect great things of God, and attempt great things for God."** Certainly Peter did that! I am afraid that many of us are satisfied with little things from God. Notice that Jesus did not rebuke Peter for asking.

Mat 14:29 *So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.*

- **When Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water!** I love it. Stepping out in faith. He is doing it! He is walking on the water to go to Jesus. It is supernatural! Here Peter is defying gravity! We too, will defy gravity soon in going to be with our Lord, either at the Rapture of the church or when He takes us individually home!
- **Some say that Peter failed to walk on the water, but that is not the way my Bible reads.** My Bible says that Peter *walked* on the water to go to Jesus. This is not failure! Peter asked a tremendous thing of God. No wonder God used him in such a wonderful way during the days that followed. No wonder he was chosen to preach the sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

Mat 14:30 *But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"*

- **But then something happened. Notice the three words, saw, sink and save!** He got his eyes off of Jesus. He *saw* the boisterous seas, on the wind. He got his eyes off of Jesus, on to the circumstances. He began to *sink*.
- **What a lesson that is for us.** How Satan loves to focus our attention on our problems. When we get our eyes off of Jesus and begin to look at our situation, look at our problems, fear grips our hearts, and we begin to *sink!*
- **Beginning to sink!** Notice that Peter cried out as he was *beginning to sink*. That is a great example for us. When in our most difficult trials and afflictions, we need to cry, soon, quickly, as we begin to sink!, not like Jonah, waiting maybe as much as three days to cry out! When you are starting to sin, cry out to Him, with a great prayer, "Lord, save me.! Notice the response of Jesus! **"Immediately**

Jesus stretched out His hand”! How quickly do you recognize that in a storm, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus? How quickly do you say? Lord, save me?

- **Paul the apostle was talking of the problems of his ministry.** (2Co 3:5-6) *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, [6] who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
- **Who can handle these things?** But our sufficiency is not of ourselves! Our sufficiency is of Christ. The key is just keeping your eyes on Jesus. In (Heb 12:1-2) *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- **Lord, save me!”** Peter was doing fine until he got his eyes off the Lord. He began to *sink* when he began to look at the circumstances. But he knew who to call on! His response and recourse was the old, tried, approved remedy, and that was prayer! He cried, **Lord, save me!** His praying is fervent and effective! When faith is weak, prayer should be strong. Our Lord Jesus has taught us in the day of our fear to *offer up strong cries, (Heb 5:7) who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.* Peter got right down to business, and you and I need to pray like that.

Mat 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt" (distazo – duplicate, waver, doubt)?"

- **When you feel yourself beginning to sink, all you have to do is just say, Lord, save me,** and you'll find He's right there. Immediately, the Lord stretched out His hand and lifted him up. Do you feel like you are going down? Do you feel like the pressures are too much, being overwhelmed with the whole situation? The Lord is so near! Just cry to Him and say, Lord, save me. You will find He is right there! Help is close at hand. All you have to do is call.
- **O you of little faith, why did you doubt?** I do believe that Jesus said that sort of just with a chuckle. Just, Hey what happened, man? You are doing pretty good! Peter, what went wrong? The question was to cause Peter to analyze, to learn from this. Now learn a lesson, Peter. You were doing okay but something went wrong. What went wrong, Peter? Why did you doubt? As Peter would go back over the situation, he would realize that he doubted because he got his eyes off of Jesus. He began to look at the problem and fear gripped his heart. He was afraid of that wave coming towards him.
- **Jesus wanted Peter to realize that when he got his eyes off** the Lord and onto the situation, fear took over and faith fled. Because faith and fear cannot co-exist at the same place. Fear will dispel your faith and faith will dispel your fear. If you have faith, you will not have fear. If you have fear, you do not have faith. Jesus said, *"O you of little faith. Why did you doubt?"* What happened that caused you to doubt? You had a little faith, you were able to start, but you were not able to continue. You were more concerned with the wind and the waves, than responding to My beckoning call.

Mat 14:32 *And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.*

Mat 14:33 *Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."*

- **This was a consciousness that did not come upon them immediately!** Not just, Wow! Jesus is the Son of God. It was something that was a growing consciousness. It is not until a little later we get to chapter sixteen, when they are at Caesarea, Philippi, (Mat 16:15-17) *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" [16] Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*
- **At this point, though, with these miracles of His walking on the water and feeding the 5,000, somehow that did not penetrate.** But when He gets in the ship with Peter, that suddenly the winds ceased, it was calm, there came this consciousness, this awareness, this must be the Son of God. But it was a growing awareness, a growing consciousness. Now they say, **"Truly You are the Son of God."** Earlier after He had calmed the sea, they had said, (Mat 8:27) *So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"*

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

Mat 14:34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

- *The land of Gennesaret, over near Magdala, where Mary Magdalene came from.*

Mat 14:35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick,

Mat 14:36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

- **Our mighty Lord! It is interesting that the gospels are recording so much of the ministry of Jesus through healing.** It tells us some of the things He said but constantly, it is actually just sharing the fact that He was healing so many people.
- **In healing them, He was showing to them what He was telling them.** He was telling them that God is love and is concerned with His creation, that God desires to touch those who are weak and to make them strong. To touch those who are sick and to make them whole. The ministry of Jesus was a show and tell. It was not just telling them the truths of God, but it was showing them the truths of God, as He was healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases and manifesting to them the power of God. They were coming just wanting to touch the hem of His garment and whoever would touch, they were made perfectly whole.
- **By faith, right now, we are to reach out and touch the hem of His garment.** Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Help is very close. All you have to do is call out.
- **No matter what your need, right now, Jesus, help is very close.** If you are in need of salvation tonight, help is very close. If you will just confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Salvation is very close.
- **If you are in need of a touch in your body right now, help is very close. Just ask Jesus!** He is nearby. Lord, help me. If you are going through financial problems, help is very close. Jesus is very near to you.
- **Just call on Him. Reach out, touch Him. Let Him touch you.** I love it. Immediately, He stretched forth His hand and took hold of Peter, lifted him up. He will take hold of your hand, He will lift you up!

Summary -

Question? What led to Herod's terrible decision to have John the Baptist beheaded?

- **A lesson for us! Looking at what led up to Herod's decision making and action!** Herod had a guilty conscience, regretting what he has done. Several practical things we must stay away from, less we go down that path that Herod did. Here are at least four things we must avoid!
- **Drunkness.** Nobody make good or righteous decisions when they are drunk.
- **Lust** brought inflamed by a very sensual dance. Acting on lust always lead to deep regret!
- **Peer pressure!** Decisions based on the powerful influence of peer pressure rather than the principle of right and wrong. Are you looking for approval of peers or for the Rapture and being with Jesus? What does His word say here?
- **The inability to admit that you are wrong!** To quickly admit you did a dumb thing, but now I want to do the right thing. If I dig in on a wrong decision, I can never make a wrong decision, right! Admit, confessing to God, that my decision and action was wrong! Repent and turn from it! Turn to and be obedient to His Word!

Simple Question? How well do you handle the storms in life, when you're in the will of God?

- **Do life's storms still tend to surprise me and make me doubt** about whether I am in the will of God in this particular circumstance?
- **The disciples were right in the middle of God's will.** But notice the severe storm they encountered. We can see that their storm was a part of Jesus developing their faith.
- **We need to remember, Jesus' word is going to have the final say in our situation!** When He says, we are going to go to the other side, then we are going to go to the other side!
- **We are going to make it! But, we have to keep our eyes on Him in the middle of all of that and**

not the circumstances.

- **He is the one and only place!** There is only one place I can set my eyes in this world and that is on **Someone who is greater than every storm I will face!** He is the author and the finisher of my faith!
- **Are you transfixed tonight by your storm? Is it using up all the oxygen in the room in your life?** Are you sinking and afraid? Are you **filled with despair?**
- **It is a temptation for us. We fall prey to it.** And that is why it is in the Bible!
- **It is so easy, no matter how long, we have walked with the Lord, for some period of time, to have the circumstances just mesmerize us, frighten us and begin to sink us. We need that reminder!**
- *O you of little faith. Why did you doubt?* **Jesus wanted Peter to realize that when he got his eyes off the Lord and onto the situation, fear took over and faith fled.** Faith and fear cannot co-exist at the same place. Fear will dispel your faith and faith will dispel your fear. If you have faith, you will not have fear. If you have fear, you do not have faith!
- **To get our eyes back upon Him when He says we are going to get from here to heaven, or we are going to get from here to the fulfillment of such and such a promise. He takes responsibility Himself for making sure that that happens!**
- **Turn your eyes on Jesus!**

Closing Song:

Mat 14:30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

Mat 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

TURN YOUR EYES ON JESUS – Michael W. Smith

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His Glory and Grace.

Closing Prayer:

Assignment for next week: Read *Matthew Chapter 15*