

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-20-23

Matthew 14

Herod Fears That Jesus Is John The Baptist Raised From The Dead – Verses 1-2

¹ At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus, ²and he said to his attendants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

14:1 Herod the tetrarch (Herod Antipas) was one of three rulers over the four districts of Palestine. His territory included the regions of Galilee and Perea. He was the son of Herod the Great, who ordered the killing of the babies in Bethlehem (2:16). He heard Jesus' case before Jesus' crucifixion (Luke 23:6-12).

Herod's Cruel Treatment Of John The Baptist – Verses 3-12

³ Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴ for John had been saying to him: “It is not lawful for you to have her.” ⁵ Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet. ⁶ On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much ⁷ that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” ⁹ The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted ¹⁰ and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹ His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. ¹² John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

14:3 Philip, Herod's half brother, was another of Palestine's three rulers. His territories were Iturea and Traconitis, northeast of the Sea of Galilee (Luke 3:1). Philip's wife, Herodias, left Philip to live with Herod Antipas. John the Baptist condemned the two for living immorally (see Mark 6:17-18). 1

14:9 Herod did not want to kill John the Baptist, but he gave the order so that he wouldn't be embarrassed in front of his guests. How easy it is to give in to the crowd and to let ourselves be pressured into doing wrong. Don't get in a situation where it will be too embarrassing to do what is right. Determine to do what is right, no matter how embarrassing or painful it may be.

Jesus Departs, Not Wishing To Run Afoul Of Herod – Verse 13

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

14:13 Jesus sought solitude after the news of John's death. Sometimes we may need to deal with our grief alone. Jesus did not dwell on his grief but returned to the ministry he came to do.

Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand – Verses 14-16

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

14:14 Jesus performed some miracles as signs of his identity. He used other miracles to teach important truths. But here we read that he healed people because he “had compassion on them.” Jesus was, and is, a loving, caring, and feeling person. When you are suffering, remember that Jesus hurts with you. He has compassion on you.

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand – Verses 17-19

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. ¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

14:17-19 Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed over 5,000 people. What he was originally given seemed insufficient, but in his hands it became more than enough. We often feel that our contribution to Jesus is meager, but he can use and multiply whatever we give him, whether it is talent, time, or treasure. It is when we give them to Jesus that our resources are multiplied.

The Multitudes Are Fed – Verses 20-21

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

14:21 The text states that there were 5,000 men present, besides women and children. Therefore, the total number of people Jesus fed could have been 10,000 to 15,000. The number of men is listed separately because in the Jewish culture of the day, men and women usually ate separately when in public. The children ate with the women.

Another Storm On The Sea Of Galilee – Verses 22-24

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

14:23 Seeking solitude was an important priority for Jesus (see also 14:13). He made room in his busy schedule to be alone with the Father. Spending time with God in prayer nurtures a vital relationship with him and equips us to meet life’s challenges and struggles. Develop the discipline of spending time alone with God. It will help you grow spiritually and become more and more like Christ.

Jesus Comes To Both Help And Comfort His Disciples – Verses 25-27

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

14:25 In the fourth watch of the night: This was somewhere between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. According to Mark ([Mark 6:47-52](#)), Jesus came to the disciples when the boat was in the middle of the sea and after they had exhausted themselves rowing against the waves and windy storm.

14:26-27 Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid: Jesus didn’t come to the disciples to trouble them or make them afraid. There are two good reasons to put away fear. One reason may be that the problem is not nearly as bad as one had thought; perhaps you are afraid because you exaggerate the danger. The other reason is that even though the problem may be real, there is an even greater solution and help at hand.

Peter’s Lack Of Faith – Verses 28-33

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” ³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

14:28 Peter was not putting Jesus to the test, something we are told not to do (4:7). Instead, he was the only one in the boat to react in faith. His impulsive request led him to experience a rather unusual demonstration of God’s power. Peter started to sink because he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the high waves around him. His faith wavered when he realized what he was doing. We might not walk on water, but we do walk through tough situations. If we focus on the waves of difficult circumstances around us without looking to Jesus for help, we, too, may despair and sink. To maintain your faith when situations are difficult, focus on Jesus’ power rather than on your inadequacies.

14:30-31 Although we start out with good intentions, sometimes our faith falters. This doesn’t necessarily mean we have failed. When Peter’s faith faltered, he reached out to Christ, the only one who could help. He was afraid, but he still looked to Christ. When you are apprehensive about the troubles around you and doubt Christ’s presence or ability to help, remember that he is always with you and is the only one who can really help.

Multitudes Are Healed As They Touch Jesus – Verses 34-36

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him ³⁶ and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

14:35-36 The people recognized Jesus as a great healer, but how many understood who he truly was? They came to Jesus for physical healing, but did they come for spiritual healing? They came to prolong their lives on earth, but did they come seeking eternal life? People may follow Jesus to learn valuable lessons from his life or in hopes of finding relief from pain. But we miss Jesus’ whole

message if we seek him only to heal our bodies but not our souls, if we look to him for help only in this life, rather than for his eternal plan for us. Only when we understand the real Jesus Christ can we appreciate how he can truly change our lives.

14:36 Jewish men wore tassels on the lower edges of their cloaks according to God's command (Deuteronomy 22:12). By Jesus' day, elaborate versions of these tassels were seen as signs of holiness (23:5). It was natural that people seeking healing should reach out and touch the tassels of his cloak. But as one sick woman learned, healing came from faith and not from Jesus' clothing (9:19-22).