

Matthew ch 14

Ch 14 reintroduces J.B to us for just a short little segment, and this is where we learn of the death of J.B. how he died and why he died. You recall the last time we heard from John was back in ch 11 when John had sent by word of his disciples from prison to ask Jesus if He was in fact the Coming One or were they to look for another. And it wasn't so much that John lacked faith as it was that he lacked patience, he like the rest of the nation was looking for their Messiah to set up His earthly reign pretty much immediately upon His appearing. and John was familiar with such Messianic prophecies such as Isa 61:1 which says quite plainly "*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound.*"

Yet here sets John in prison bound by Herod and Jesus isn't exactly busting him loose or establishing His kingdom, so hey this is neat and all but if you're the guy we've been looking for lets get this show on the road. But that wasn't the purpose for Jesus' 1st visit, and so He told John's disciples, "*Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended* (or stumbled, or tripped up) *because of Me.*" In other words, yeah John I Am the One that you've been waiting on, (that was sort of His encoded message to John when He told him of all the things that He had been doing because those were in fact Messianic attributes and fulfillments.) But it's not all going to go exactly like everyone's thinking, and so blessed is he who isn't offended because of Me. In other words, blessed is the one who's not by their own preconceived ideas of who Jesus is and the way He's supposed to work in our lives. "Well I thought that when I came to Jesus that all my problems were going to be over and that this, and this, and this was going to happen, I was supposed to get that promotion now not get fired, my wife was supposed to come to know you Jesus, not leave me because you've changed my life."

People become offended towards Christ; don't be stumbled because of your own preconceived conclusions concerning Jesus, "*blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.*" And you recall how Jesus immediately began to commend J.B. and spoke of how solid he was, that he wasn't a man who was confused as to what life was all about. He didn't get all caught up in materialism but he kept his focus on the kingdom and knew the reality of what it meant to leave this planet with out repenting of your sin and getting right with God. and So his life was devoted to the kingdom of God and the preaching of repentance of sin.

Jesus said concerning J.B. that of those born of women there has not arisen one greater than J.B. In Jesus' opinion John was greater than Moses, David, Daniel, and all the patriarchs and since Jesus butters no one up but only speaks the truth I'd say that, that's a pretty high compliment. But that was the last time we heard mention of J.B. and now he resurfaces and we find out why he was imprisoned and how he died, ch 14 also gives us 2 of the most popular accounts in the gospels, the feeding of the 5,000 and Peter walking on water. Lets begin ch 14.

Vs1-

Now, Herod the tetrarch was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the great, Herod the Great was the Herod that was so paranoid, that he was always having people put to death because he thought that they were out to get his throne. He's also the Herod that we read of early on in the gospel of Matt who having heard of another king being born (in regards to Jesus) and realizing that the wise men weren't coming back to tell him where Jesus was at, he had all the male children in Bethlehem and its surrounding districts that were 2yrs old and younger killed. But now he's dead, and when he died his kingdom was divided up into 3 parts and his sons were given rule over these 3 parts, even though this particular Herod's title means ruler over a 1/4 part, it was also a general title of authority given to petty rulers and he was the one that was ruling over the general area where Jesus did a lot of His ministry. and So now he's caught wind of what Jesus has been up to and the fame and recognition that Jesus has been getting.

Vs2

Sounds to me like old Herod's got a guilty conscience, and that he's a bit freaked out, because John spoke out so boldly against his lifestyle, and so this is the Herod that had John imprisoned and killed. and Now he catches wind of another "prophet" of God out there on the scene doing all these miraculous things and immediately superstition along with a guilty conscience go to work on him. and Even though John never performed so much as 1 miracle, Herod assumes that if he's risen from the dead, that could easily explain these other miraculous powers at work in him. And now Matt takes the time over the next 9 vs to give us a little flashback as to what exactly happened and why Herod is reasoning along this level.

Vs3-4

John the Baptist was a straight shooter, he didn't mix words, he just laid it out like it was. Remember Jesus said concerning John, what did you come out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken by the wind? Suggesting a weak and vacillating individual who was so unsure of himself that he was tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and major opinion. No way, John shared the unwatered down truth of the word and he didn't care who you were or how powerful of an individual you were supposed to be. If you were in sin, he exposed it and called you to repentance, needless to say he wouldn't be to popular today.

Herod was no exception. He had enticed Herodias, his ½ brother Philip's wife to leave Philip and he divorced his wife, and those 2 got hooked up. and The law strictly forbids the taking of your brother's wife, (Lev 18:16, Lev 20:21) and here in vs 4 where it says that John "*had said*" it's in the imperfect tense. Which is to say that it wasn't a one-time thing that John said and then he let it go, but rather John repeated the error of Herod's way over and over, exposing his sin for what it was. And finally got to the point that Herod had John arrested just to get him silenced.

Vs5

Now we're given a little bit of insight into the type of man that Herod was, he was a coward that was always making his decisions based upon what other people thought or what they would think of him. He wanted to kill John but was afraid of all the people, because they considered him a prophet. It wasn't that he feared God so he spared his life. He feared man, and that's going to be ultimately the reason that he has John executed, because he's worried about what the people around him think; the bible says the fear of man will bring a snare, if you're always concerned with what everyone else is thinking you're only going to wind up getting yourself into trouble. But the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, your primary concern needs to be, what is God thinking. Such was not the case with Herod, but when we read Mark's account we find that Herod and John must've talked on several occasions while John was in prison, and that Herod began to take a liking to John, he realized that John was a just and godly man, and that although he was convicted by John, he respected him none the less.

Vs6

Herodias' daughter's name was Salome and most scholars say that she at this time would've been somewhere between 14-17 yrs old. and She danced no doubt very suggestively and sensuously b4 Herod and since it was Herod's birthday there was probably wine flowing freely, and she's all enticing Herod by the way she was dancing, and So Herod just kind of irrationally spits out,

Vs7

Mark's Gospel tells us that he offered her up to ½ of his kingdom

Vs8-9

Notice again he was worried about what everyone else was thinking about him, after all he had made an oath and now he'd look bad if he retracted it. More concerned about the praise of man than the praise of God, and I'm just telling you that's never a good place to be.

Vs10-12

And so that's the way John's life was brought to an end and his ministry as the forerunner of Jesus was brought to a close. He was killed because he didn't compromise the truth, and Herod was too much of a coward to do the right thing, and so his disciples came and took the body and then went and told John's cousin, Jesus. And by this account, Matt is setting the stage for the death of Jesus Himself; in that even as they didn't receive the Lord's forerunner, neither will they accept the Lord Himself.

Vs13

No doubt taken back a bit by the news of His cousin's death, although Jesus was fully God, He was also fully man and when someone that's near to you dies, often times you find yourself seeking solace in just getting alone for a little bit and collecting your thoughts. And this no doubt stirred Jesus as to the reality of His own death that He knew He was shortly to face, and so the human side of Jesus possibly being just a bit overwhelmed just wanted to get alone for a little while. (Finish vs)
The Sea of Galilee isn't that far across 8 miles or so, and so when Jesus got into the boat with His disciples they just watched which direction He was headed. and When they saw where He was headed they just walked around the lake to the other side and so when the boat arrived at its destination, according to Mark's gospel they were already there waiting for Him.

Vs. 14

What tremendous insight into the heart of Jesus, here He had just heard of the death of one of His dear friends, we find in the other gospels that the disciples had been out ministering, they were all just exhausted and in need of rest and so Jesus says hey boys, lets take a little time off here and get some rest. So they take off to head to a deserted place only to find that when they pull up on shore some 12-20,000 people waiting for Him. And you can just picture the disciples all fatigued and just up to here with it, and understandably so, they had been giving and giving and giving to the people and were worn out.

The Lord was contemplating the death of His friend which no doubt stirred His heart concerning His own approaching death. They just needed a little time to get away and be alone and get refreshed only to find when they get to shore people packed as tight as they could get as far as the eye could see. Not wanting to minister to them in their time of need, but wanting to be ministered to, not wanting to give, but wanting to take, and what did the Lord do? Did He say don't you people get it, I give and give and give to you people and you don't seek Me in Spirit and in truth, you want me to get rid of that flu bug that's been ailing you, you want me to heal you of your leprosy, you seek Me out because you can't see, you don't seek Me to the glory of God, all you're looking for is what's in it for you. No, it says that He was "moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick."

When Jesus taught on denying yourself, He lived it 1st, when He said if you want to be the greatest in the kingdom you've got to learn to be the servant of all, He was speaking from experience. If there was ever a time when Jesus just wanted to be alone it was here, and yet He denied Himself and became the servant of all and taught these people about the kingdom of God and spent time ministering to their needs. This phrase "moved with compassion" speaks of more than just feeling sympathy for them; it speaks of a deep inner stirring. As one commentator puts it "He was moved with compassion for them to the depths of His being."

In other words way down deep in His gut, He was moved at the plight of the afflicted and the needy, He looked on them as sheep having no shepherd, just kind of wandering aimlessly with out hope and direction. Is that you this morning, you feel like you're kind of wandering around aimlessly with out hope and with out direction, Jesus desires to minister to your deepest need, and He looks upon you with compassion, but He won't force Himself upon you, you've got to be willing to let Him gather you in and touch your life. As I said last week when Jesus was looking out over Jerusalem and said, "*How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*" That's the heart of God, He longs to gather you in and be the One that meets those deep needs of your heart that keep you lying awake at night in tears, but you've got to be willing, because God honors your free will, you can choose to accept His healing touch, or you can reject His touch upon your life, it's up to you. Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes, may God give us a heart like Jesus when we look upon people in need of direction, in need of a healing touch, Jesus said if any man comes to Me I will by no means cast him out. But Jeff you don't understand where I've been and what I've done, you're right I don't, but Jesus does, and He said if any man comes to Me I will by no means cast him out, and that includes you, come to Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, rest for your souls. If God has that type of compassion for us, may we have that same attitude of compassion toward others.

Vs15

So the disciples sort of appointing themselves as the Lords board of Directors try to reason with Jesus concerning the well being of the people, maybe they think that He's been so busy ministering to them that He doesn't really realize that time's slipping away from them. Now we read in Johns Gospel that earlier Jesus had turned to Philip and asked him where are we going to get enough food to feed all these people? and Philip said to Jesus 200 denarii worth of bread wouldn't be enough to feed each of these people just a little bit. But it says that Jesus had asked Philip that to test him because He already knew in Himself what He was going to do. He was trying to teach these guys that God has resources of which we know nothing about; He's not limited to our means, but rather He has unlimited means, and He was showing these guys that you can trust your heavenly Father even when, the odds seem so stacked against you that you find yourself in an impossible situation.

God loves impossible circumstances; because then when He does the work it's unmistakably Him and He receives all the honor and all the glory. But the disciples much like us couldn't get past the impossibility, and so they reasoned that if these people were going to eat they probably needed to get going before it got too dark.

Vs16-17

And we read in John's Gospel that, even these weren't theirs but that they belonged to a little boy that was lingering around the scene. So when you read of these 5 loaves and 2 fish don't think that they were these 5 huge loaves of bread and these 2 gigantic sea bass that the disciples had on hand for themselves. These were 5 little buns of bread and 2 small fish that some mother had packed her little boy for lunch, and he was quite capable of eating every bite. But what did Jesus do?

Vs 18

What's the lesson here, when we don't have the ability to meet the needs around us, or lack the resources to meet a certain need, take it to Jesus, because He is able. And I might add that He alone is able.

Vs19

If Jesus used the typical Jewish prayer in regards to breaking the bread, He would've said something like, "Blessed art Thou who bringest forth bread from the earth." And we see in this the place of the disciple in the work of Christ, it's Jesus who supplies the need, the disciples just distribute it. This is a practical picture of Jesus working through the hands of His disciples. He was doing it then and He is still doing it today, when Jesus told these guys to feed the multitudes they had 5 loaves and 2 fish. But when they gave it to Jesus, He multiplied it such to the extent that we'll see that there was enough not only to feed every body, but that there was 12 baskets of untouched left overs. and The Lord wants to use your life to "feed the multitudes" as well, And He wants to start with what you have in your hand. If you will bring to God whatever it is that you have in your hand, He will use it to do a work that brings Him glory.

Moses, what's in your hand? A rod, I'm going to use it to bring Myself glory, David what's in your hand? A slingshot, I'm going to use that to do a mighty work. Peter what's in your hand? A fishing net, follow Me and I'll make you a fisher of men, the Lord want's whatever it is that you have in your hand, and He wants to multiply it to His glory, what did the disciples have that day? 5 loaves and 2 fish, Jesus said give it to Me and multitudes will be fed, it doesn't take much with the Lord, you offer over to Him whatever it is that you have over to Jesus and He'll use it for His Glory, but you've got to give to Him.

Vs20-21

You add 1 woman and 1 child to each man you're immediately up to 15,000 people, that's why I said a minute ago that when they stepped off the boat they were looking at probably 12-20,000 people. This account of the feeding of the 5,000, apart from the resurrection is the only miracle that's recorded in all 4 gospels. And it shows us on a practical level that we're to trust the Lord even when things seem impossible, knowing that He has unlimited resources that we know nothing about. It's easy for us to have faith when we can figure it out, but this account teaches us that we're to trust Jesus even when we can't figure it all out.

On maybe a little bit deeper of a level (on the Spiritual side of things) what we see in this miracle is Jesus' ability to satisfy the hunger of all men. Last week we spoke briefly of Jesus' ability to quench your every thirst, in this text we see the Lord's ability to satisfy your deepest hunger. That deep hunger that you have with in your heart for reality, for purpose, for meaning, only Jesus can satisfy that. An interesting little side note, we see in the breaking of this bread another foreshadowing of the last supper. In that the sequence in which the Lord took, blessed, broke, and gave here, is the exact same sequence that we read in the account of the Lord's supper in Matt 26:26, and I don't believe that that's by any means a coincidence. Because Jesus broke bread here for them, but it was another foreshadowing of His own body being broken for us, Jesus said, I Am the bread of life and he who comes to Me will never hunger and he who believes in Me will never thirst. So, much to be learned in the feeding of the 5,000.

Vs22

We learn in another Gospel that He did this because the people wanted to make Him their king by force. But it wasn't because they saw Him as Lord of heaven and earth, but because He could take care of them, heal them when they were sick, feed them when they were hungry. And so Jesus got the disciples out of there, dismissed the people and we read in vs 23

Vs23

So Jesus finally is able to get alone and spend some time in prayer, and don't you know that if it was important for Jesus, (the Son of God) to spend time alone with God, seeking Him in prayer, how much more do we need to be spending time in prayer. Seeking wisdom and guidance and strength from the Lord, if Jesus needed it then believe me when I say we need it, as a church we move forward on our knees.

Vs24-25

Now the 4th watch would've been somewhere between 3: and 6: A.M. and they're out there giving it all they got, just trying to be obedient to Jesus in going to the other side. They've been rowing all night and things just keep getting worse, now the storm is tossing the boat back and forth, it's 3 or 4 in the morning and here comes Jesus, right when they least expect it. and We see in this another display of the deity of Jesus Christ and His authority over creation, but notice how they reacted, hey look it's something we see everyday a man walking on the water at 4 in the morning. No way, we see again their human side.

V26-27

Now this little phrase here, "it is I" is interesting because when the Hebrew was translated into the Greek, the Exodus account of when Moses was talking to God and said who should I say sent me? (In regards to going back to Egypt to free the children of Israel) When God responded to Moses in Ex 3:14 He said I Am that I Am, when that was translated into the Greek it was translated into the exact same words that we're reading that Jesus is using here. (egoo' eiemi) I Am, Jesus is taking another claim here to His deity, the ever-present one, the self existent One, it is I Am. He's claiming the same title as God did at the burning bush, So basically He is saying don't be afraid it is I Am. That's pretty heavy.(And now we come to that famous portion of scripture)

Vs28-33

So we see that as long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus he was able to move forward even in the midst of the storm. But as soon as he got his eyes off of the Lord he began to sink. What's the application? That as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus we'll be able to move forward, but as soon as we get our eyes off of Jesus and onto our boisterous circumstances we'll begin to sink. How many times have the storms been blowing in our lives and we find ourselves in Peter's shoes, we start off real well, we're moving forward, braving the storm. And we're not told what took his eyes off of Jesus; maybe as long as he was with in eyeshot of the boat there was a certain element of security there. But when he looked back and didn't see the boat and knew that he was 3-4 miles from the shoreline he thought what am I doing? Maybe things were going real well and suddenly a wave splashed him in the face and it sort of jarred him and he began to look around and realized that what he was doing wasn't humanly possible and it freaked him out.

We're not told but this much is for sure, something happened and he began to lose faith. He got his eyes off of Jesus and onto his circumstances and because of that he was overwhelmed and began to sink. How many times we start out so well and then something happens, something sort of splashes us in the face or we lose that element of self sufficiency and we think what's going on here and we get our eyes off of Jesus and onto those circumstances and we completely freak out. And Peter didn't step out of God's will when he stepped out of the boat, so many times when trials break out in our lives we think, what did I do to deserve this, how have I messed up, what's gotten me into this? Well, maybe Jesus has gotten you into it, Jesus sent them all right into the middle of the storm, don't think for a minute that Jesus didn't know it was coming. and He called Peter right out into the thick of it, into a seemingly impossible situation, but here's the key, nothings impossible with God, so don't think that every time choppy waters hit your life that you're some how out of God's will. It could be a time of testing that God has allowed you to enter into so that you might grow in your faith and dependency upon Him.

Peter also gives us the key on what to do when we seem overwhelmed, vs30, cry out to Jesus, He cried out "*Lord save me.*" Probably one of the shortest prayers in the bible, Peter got down to business, he didn't mix words and try and butter up the Lord, he was in trouble and he was going down, and he cried out for all that he was worth, Lord save me. and Jesus was right there to immediately set his feet right back onto certainty with Him right there by his side. If you feel like you're spinning out of control this morning, there's a storm that's broke loose in your life and you're going down. I implore you cry out to Jesus and He'll hear the cry of your heart, and He'll pull you up out of the miry clay and set your feet on solid ground. and You will realize that truly He is the Son of God because He'll touch your life and you'll never be the same.

Vs34-36

Not because He had a magic garment, but because it was what they needed to release their faith, it was that point of contact that they knew if I could only get to Jesus I know I'll be made whole. Because that's what Jesus is in the business of doing, healing lives and making people whole, people come to Jesus sick, battered by this world, and Jesus looks upon each and everyone of them with compassion. and Whoever it is that's willing to come to Him, He will by no means cast out, but as many as touched it were made perfectly well.