

Lesson 2 – 7 November 2010.

Miracles of the King

Lesson Scope: [Matthew chapters 14 and 15:21-39.](#)

Lesson Focus

Following His preaching of the kingdom parables, Jesus returned to His home area. The people there, who could not see past His earthly blood relationships and occupation, rejected His teaching. Jesus' ministry in Nazareth was hindered because of their unbelief.

About the same time King Herod fulfilled his rash oath by ordering the execution of John the Baptist. Then, when he heard of Jesus' miracles and fame, Herod erroneously ascribed them to a resurrected John.

Jesus had sent out disciples in pairs to preach and heal. When they returned, Jesus invited them to come apart and rest awhile. The multitudes saw Jesus and the disciple depart by ship, and they set out on foot to meet the ship when it came ashore. Instead of finding needed rest, Jesus and His disciples encountered a needy multitude.

Jesus responds with compassion to the needs of humanity. In meeting needs, He ever seeks to lead men to understand the deeper values of life

These miracles of the King lend themselves to a practical lesson well rooted in spiritual truth. In each section, note how the Lord responds to the situation, and note how the disciples respond. As Christians, we want to imitate Christ. Is our response similar to His?

While the miracles we are studying in this lesson involve supernatural intervention, our response should be a commitment of faith. How can Christians remain committed to the faith under trial? Face the challenge of complacency; in these end times, storm clouds are gathering. Are we prepared for the storm?

Lesson Aim: To inspire faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Theme Verses: [John 20:30-31](#). And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Lesson Text.

"Give Ye Them to Eat"

Matthew 14:13-20

When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities. ¹⁴And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

¹⁵And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. ¹⁶But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. ¹⁷And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. ¹⁸He said, Bring them hither to me. ¹⁹And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. ²⁰And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

"Be of Good Cheer"

Matthew 14:23-33

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. ²⁴But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. ²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. ²⁶And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. ²⁷But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. ²⁸And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. ²⁹And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. ³¹And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? ³²And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. ³³Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

"Be It Unto Thee"

Matthew 15:22-28

And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. ²³But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. ²⁴But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ²⁵Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. ²⁶But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. ²⁷And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. ²⁸Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Questions for Study

"Give Ye Them to Eat"

1. Contrast the response of the disciples (Matthew 14:15) with that of Jesus (Matthew 14:16).
2. How does Jesus feeding of the Multitude illustrate His ability and methods in providing for us spiritually?

"Be of Good Cheer"

3. Why did Peter merit Jesus rebuke?
4. How can we benefit from life's stormy experiences?

"Be It Unto Thee"

5. In what ways did the woman express faith?
6. What did Jesus accomplish by delaying an answer to her prayer?
7. How can we be content in our faith while still growing spiritually?

Analyzing the Passage

When Jesus and the disciples entered the ship, they crossed the Sea of Galilee to find rest. Surrounded by mountains, this sea is subject to sudden, violent storms.

In each of these accounts, note how the disciples responded according to their own desires, while Jesus' response was always one of selfless compassion for others. The miraculous feeding of the multitude is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels.

The fourth watch (Matthew 14:25) would run from 3-6:00 A.m. The state-

ment "It is I" (Matthew 14:27) equates with I AM" as it refers to Jehovah God. The same coasts (Matthew 15:22) are the borders of Tyre and Sidon.

Jesus' earthly ministry was primarily to the Jews (Matthew 15:24), who were then to spread God's blessing throughout the world.

Principles and Applications

"Give Ye Them to Eat"

1. Seeing people in need moves Jesus to compassion (Matthew 14:14). He knows what we need even before we ask. His compassion for humanity is rooted in His infinite love, as shown by His willingness to lay aside His rightful glory in heaven to dwell with men and provide the only sacrifice able to redeem us.

2. Jesus has an orderly plan for meeting people's needs (Matthew 14:16-19). Reading all four accounts of this event reveals that the distribution of the loaves and fishes was done in an orderly and efficient manner. Perhaps as many as ten thousand people were seated in groups of fifty. The meal was finished with sufficient time for the crowd to disperse and for Jesus to go into the mountain before dark. His orderly plan continues today. He meets some of our physical needs through the various cycles of nature. He meets our spiritual needs through the orderliness of Christian families and church life. Government leaders are responsible to keep order in society. Let us thank God for His abundant blessings.

3. Jesus involves others in the sharing of His blessings (Matthew 14:17-19). While He certainly provided the miracle, Jesus also included His disciples and the boy who brought the food. Each had a part to fill.

We also have a part to fill in sharing God's blessings with others.

Perhaps we can help the elderly neighbor with some household chores or property maintenance. The weekly offering is an opportunity to help others in material needs. Even giving a cup of cold water will be rewarded.

4. Jesus' provisions are more than sufficient (14:20). We can rest content in the fact that God abundantly supplies our needs. It is when we look around at what others have that discontent begins to take root. As we strive to be good stewards of the talents and opportunities that God gives us, we will find that He provides richly.

"Be of Good Cheer"

5. In the hour of popularity, Jesus sought it place of solitude and prayer (Matthew 14:23). Popularity brings temptations to be proud to o rely on

self, and to gauge right and wrong by popular opinion. Jesus set a good example for us. The people wanted to make Him king, but Jesus chose rather to seek fellowship with His Father and to do His will.

6. Obedience to the Lord brings tests of faith (Matthew 14:24). The disciples were on the sea because Jesus had sent them (Mark 6:45). Tests of faith may be extremely difficult. Our Anabaptist forefathers frequently faced choices of obedience that resulted in physical torture and death. Today we face many threats to spiritual life. A choice for the Lord may result in an unfavorable financial or business situation. We may need to avoid a store with objectionable music or indoor TV ads. Pressure is on us to conform to worldly child-rearing methods. The list could go on. Let us be diligent in walking circumspectly.

7. In the midst of trial Jesus followers receive reassurance of His presence (Matthew 14:27). Jesus immediately spoke words of comfort to the disciples in the ship when they saw Him. "Be of good cheer." We need to keep our optimism and hope fresh in times of trial. God is always with us and will see us through. "It is I." Christ today still assures His people of His own presence through trial. He Himself is there. "Be not afraid." The love of God casts out fear. As we look to Him and trust in Him, our fear will give way to courage and endurance.

8. Jesus offers immediate aid to those who falter in their ventures of faith (Matthew 14:29-31). Peter sought the Lord's permission before beginning his walk, and Jesus consented. When he faltered, he was able to count on Jesus' immediate assistance. We can make "big" statements and do "great" things, but Jesus lets us know that we are helpless without His aid.

9. The Son of God can calm any storm (Matthew 14:32-33). In today's lesson passage, Jesus calmed several storms. He calmed the natural storm of wind and waves. He also calmed the storm of fear raging within the disciples because of their plight. Finally He calmed the storm of difficulty that arose because they did not place their trust in Him.

"Be It Unto Thee"

10. Faith is tested when the Lord seems to ignore it (Matthew 15:22-24). When our prayers are not answered immediately, we are tempted to believe that God does not answer prayer or that He is not with us. But God has our best interest in mind. Because He is omniscient and omnipotent. He can work things for our eternal benefit without our seeing immediate, tangible results. In persistently seeking God's blessing, we are built up in faith.

11. Humble, persevering faith will always be rewarded (Matthew 15:25-28). This woman did not take offense although ignored and even seemingly insulted. When Jesus gave an illustration that seemed to close the door for any help, she immediately used His illustration as a reason to grant her request. Jesus asserted that her faith was great, and He granted her desire.

Answers to Questions

1. Contrast the response of the disciples (Matthew 14:15) with that of Jesus (Matthew 14:16).

The disciples focused on their own needs. They were weary and simply wanted time alone to rest. Jesus saw the spiritual needs of the multitude and had compassion on the people. Instead, He provided both physical and spiritual nourishment for all present.

2. How does Jesus' feeding of the multitude illustrate His ability and methods in providing for us spiritually?

Jesus' ability to provide for us is without limitation; He can meet our need with resources to spare. His commanding the multitude to sit down on the grass suggests that Jesus expects an expression of faith in His ability to provide. He provides in an orderly way, often incorporating other people in ministering to our needs.

3. Why did Peter merit Jesus' rebuke?

Peter had just witnessed the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, as well as numerous other miracles prior to that. His faith in Jesus seemingly was not growing in proportion to the evidence he was receiving.

4. How can we benefit from life's stormy experiences?

God allows these experiences for our spiritual good. In desperation, we cry out to God, and He comforts us with His sustaining presence. Difficulties help us lean on God's promises in a special way. Stormy experiences also heighten our appreciation for times of calm and rest.

5. In what ways did the woman express faith?

First, she recognized Jesus for who He was. She sought after Him diligently. The obstacles placed in her way did not deter her. She understood her unworthiness before the Lord. She made her request with humility. She worshiped Jesus and was not ashamed to acknowledge Him publicly.

6. What did Jesus accomplish by delaying an answer to her prayer?

Jesus knew the strength of her faith. His delay tested that faith. Jesus de-

sired that the people present would see her great faith, and He wanted to reward it openly.

7. How can we be content in our faith while still growing spiritually?

We can be content, knowing we have an almighty God who loves us and desires fellowship with us. It is through this fellowship with Him that we grow spiritually. We must continually maintain that fellowship to continue growing.

Summarizing the Lesson

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.... But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.... Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which cloth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 11:1-2, 6; 12:1-2).

Important Teachings

1. Seeing people in need moves Jesus to compassion (Matthew 14:14).
2. Jesus has an orderly plan for meeting people's needs (Matthew 14:16-19).
3. Jesus involves others in the sharing of His blessings (Matthew 14:17-19).
4. Jesus' provisions are more than sufficient (Matthew 14:20).
5. In the hour of popularity, Jesus sought a place of solitude and prayer (Matthew 14:23).
6. Obedience to the Lord brings tests of faith (Matthew 14:24).
7. In the midst of trial, Jesus' followers receive reassurance of His presence (Matthew 14:27).
8. Jesus offers immediate aid to those who falter in their ventures of faith (Matthew 14:29-31).
9. The Son of God can calm any storm (Matthew 14:32-33).
10. Faith is tested when the Lord seems to ignore it (Matthew 15:22-24).
11. Humble persevering faith will always be rewarded. (Matthew 15:25-28).

Research Guide

1. Read the parallel accounts of these miracles in the other Gospels (the feeding of the multitude-Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; and John 6:5-13; walking on the water-Mark 6:47-52 and John 6:16-21; and healing the child-Mark 7:24-30).
2. Read Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17. Note His compassion and attitude of surrender and service.
3. Read the letters of some of the defenseless Christians in Martyrs Mirror for examples of committed faith.
4. Consider the thoughts on faith, endurance, and chastening in Hebrews 11 and 12.