

## Lesson 13: Chapter 14 “Jesus makes the impossible possible”

### Servant’s preparation:

[http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew\\_14.pdf](http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_14.pdf)

### Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

### Remember:

Matthew 13 focuses on Jesus teaching the kingdom of God through parables, emphasizing hidden secrets and the importance of understanding the word. The chapter explores various parables, including the Sower, Weeds, Hidden Treasure, and Pearl, each illustrating different aspects of the kingdom's nature and growth. A key takeaway is that the kingdom of God is like hidden treasure, a valuable secret revealed to those who are receptive.

### Memory Verse:

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

### Lesson opener:

The "Philip and Andrew" Skit

Pick two youth to be Philip and Andrew. Give Andrew two cans of tuna and five crackers. Have them reenact the scene described in today's lesson. Make sure that Philip expresses the impossibility of the situation, and have Andrew offer the meager supply with doubt.

Explain to the class that Philip could see no way to feed so many, and that Andrew offered what was available but doubted that Jesus could accomplish such a miracle. When Andrew spoke out, it must have seemed really silly for him to even suggest that five barley loaves and two fish could ever meet the needs of this crowd. Yet Andrew's perception was much broader than Phillip's. He looked at the resources he had but failed to rely on Jesus to meet the needs of this impossible situation.

Now that Jesus had forced them to realize their inadequacy, He told the disciples to bring their resources to Him. **Jesus makes the impossible possible.**

### Lesson Goal:

We must turn to Jesus first and trust in Him to care for us and our needs. It is so important for us to bring what we do have to Jesus.

### Lesson body:

#### **John the Baptist Beheaded (14:1-12)**

Herod the Great, who was responsible for the death of babies under two years of age around the time of Christ's birth, died around 4 B.C. Before he died, he left his kingdom to his sons, of whom "Herod Antipas" was one. Herod Antipas had been both fearful and fascinated by John the Baptist. He thought that Jesus was John coming back from the death, probably because he felt guilty over executing him.

A flashback on why John was martyred:

Herod had divorced his first wife and then taken his brother's wife Herodias, which was unlawful because his brother was alive. John publicly condemned Herod for this incestuous and sinful relationship. While the Jews were scared to blame Herod, John spoke the truth boldly. Someone could say "Why not just be quiet on this issue so that he could deal with other less dangerous issues and prolong his ministry?" But that would not be John the Baptist.

After his wife's daughter [Salome] danced, Herod made a public oath to give the girl whatever she asked for up to half of the kingdom. He just blurted this promise out in the heat of the moment. It was rash and impulsive.

Application: Do not speak or act impulsively without thinking something through.

Salome, influenced by Herodias' wickedness, chose to request the head of John the Baptist. Herod didn't want to behead John the Baptist because he had respect and fascination for John. But, since he had made a promise to Salome in front of a large group of important people and couldn't go back on his word, Herod ordered the beheading of John the Baptist. or else he would look weak.

#### **Feeding the Five Thousand (14:13-21)**

When the Lord Jesus heard what Herod did to St. John the Baptist, he went to a deserted place. The multitudes followed Jesus and His disciples, they did not consider how tired Jesus, or the disciples were; they just wanted their needs met and sicknesses healed. Jesus is a prime example of showing compassion to others. When people impose on us, our first reaction is to get angry or bitter. We say, "People should show consideration to us". He loved by putting other people first and by returning good for evil. Jesus' compassion for the people extended beyond their physical needs to their spiritual needs.

The disciples suggested that Jesus sent the people away after spending the whole day listening to Him so that they could eat.

**Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to give them something when He knew they wouldn't have been able to?**

1. Jesus was giving them an opportunity to show their faith by making a suggestion such as, "Jesus, we can't feed all these people...but You can."

2. Also, He wished they offered what they could. He asks us not to be stingy even if we have very little, but to offer it, and hence satisfy the hunger of many. Not only that, but there will be extra food, more than what we have offered. Twelve full baskets were left over!
3. Thirdly: The disciples represented the church that God uses to feed His children through.

### **Why did Jesus command them to seat the people in groups?**

As we see in 1 Corinthians 14:40, God is a God of order. Nothing generates chaos like free food. Also, this way, we have a count that they were 5000 plus their families as they were groups of fifties. A third reason is to have the disciples serve the people which is the basis of the church serving her congregation through the clergy.

*Which group would you be part of? Those who sit and be served or those who get up and serve?*

The disciples were continually helping Jesus serve the people and that should be our goal as well, not only in church, but also in our families and communities. There were twelve baskets leftover, this meant one per disciple. Jesus made sure that the disciples were provided for. He didn't forget them. If you serve Him, He won't forget you either.

Jesus promises later that He will one day give His Body and Blood as food and drink for the salvation of man (Jn 6:22-65). His miracle of feeding the 5000 and the discourse the next day are foreshadowing of the giving of Himself in the Eucharist.

He feeds everyone through His disciples, and no one who comes to Him will return hungry. He is the only one who can grant us satisfaction by means of His church.

### **Jesus Walks on the Sea(14:22-33)**

He commanded His disciples to get into the boat, and sent the multitudes away, but as for Himself, He went up the mountain. He allowed them to go to the middle of the sea, and He walked on the water to save them when they lost hope, so they could test His presence, as the mystery of their peace, when a storm is waged against them. He knows what is for their own good.

Christ leads His disciples through the narrow door, not to be pleased with their difficulty, but rather to teach them to meet Him during their suffering and find Him a source of comfort to them.

Jesus was a busy man, yet He always found time alone to pray.

### **Did Jesus go help the disciples immediately? How long did He wait (until the 4th watch, 3-6 AM)? Why do you think He waited so long to help them?**

God doesn't always save us out of trials immediately. See Romans 5:3-5. Sometimes God sees it fit to let us experience trials for a while in order to develop our character. Jesus saw His disciples struggling against the wind. Actually, they were already very tired at this point, and this would have pushed them almost to the point of exhaustion. But for their own long-term benefit He didn't step in immediately.

Parents sometimes notice their kids struggling to do something. Is it always in their best interest to step in and do it for them? No. Some things they need to struggle with to learn. By letting them struggle with it for a while, they could learn to be humble and know their own limitations.

For the disciples, they were able to witness once again Jesus' miraculous power. Because they had struggled already for a long time against the wind, Jesus' miracle of stopping the wind became even more amazing and highlighted His divine strength against their human weakness.

Application: Instead of blaming God or growing impatient or angry, when facing trials, we should look at ourselves and ask what lessons we can learn. Maybe we need to be more dependent on God, more patient, more faithful, etc. Sometimes not stepping in and helping someone is a sign of discernment, not apathy.

The disciples were experienced sailors, and the sight of Jesus walking on the water was enough to scare them to the point where they cried out and were "terrified." It wasn't surprise or excitement, but sheer terror. At the beginning, they couldn't tell who this figure walking on water was (it was night so the light wouldn't have been enough). Jesus, however, didn't leave them in their terror, but revealed Himself to them. "It is I; do not be afraid", He said. The first order of business was to assuage their fears. Next, He decided to do another miracle to help with the trial they were facing, stopping the wind which was set against them.



Peter having seen Christ walking on the water was empowered by the faith and was able to accomplish the same through Christ. However, when he became afraid, he began to sink into the churning water. He was really attached to Jesus, but still easily overcome and prone to fall. At first, St Peter was successful but then when he took his eyes off Jesus to look at the stormy sea, he became frightened and began to sink into the churning water.

St. Peter had two choices: he could try to swim back to the boat, or he could call upon Jesus to save him. What is amazing is that the Lord did not calm down the waves so that Peter would walk on the water, but He said to Peter 'Come.'

Peter pacified the inner waves of his heart, so in faith he would walk on the waves, and would not drown.

### Takeaway and lesson delivery ideas:

#### **Where is your faith?**

We can ask the disciples while in the storm, "Did you forget His miracles?"

The disciples didn't have enough faith that night, but they did learn a valuable lesson. We need to completely trust in Jesus. They should have known that if Jesus could feed 5,000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish, He could certainly take care of them in the middle of a storm. Instead of calling on Jesus for help, they strained against the wind in their own strength. Let's remember to call on Jesus whenever we need help; He is worthy of our trust.

When Peter saw Jesus, he cried out, “Lord, if that is you bid me to come out with you.” And Jesus said, “Come!” So, Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water towards Jesus. He was doing it! As soon as he took his eyes off Jesus and put them on the storm instead, he began to sink. Then he cried out, “Lord, save me!” And the Lord reached out and saved him.

We learn a valuable lesson from Peter. When we completely trust in Jesus, we will not need to look at the storms of life but can focus on Jesus. We do not need to look at or worry about the problems or the scary things around us. We will only sink. But when we keep our eyes on Jesus, we can do amazing things during scary storms. It is wonderful to know that even when we get ourselves into scary situations (like Peter on the water) the Lord is still there to rescue us.

Let’s put all our trust and faith in Jesus! Only He is worthy of our trust. Do not put your trust in money or material things. Remember how much Jesus loves you and wants to help you; you can trust Him for everything.

**Another option: An application from the feeding miracle:**

So often we go to the Lord as a last resort, only after we have exhausted our own resources. Jesus wanted His disciples to turn to Him for help, just like you and me. We must turn to Jesus first and trust in Him to care for us and our needs. It is so important for us to bring what we do have to Jesus. He does not ask US to provide the impossible, only to bring what we do have to HIM so that He can meet the need.

Many times, we look at how little we have and how impossible the situation is. But in Jesus we can “do all things.” If He asks us to do something, we need to realize that He will give us the ability and resources that we need to carry out what He has asked of us. Jesus makes possible the impossible.