

## **Review**

As you recall from last week's study, John the Baptist had been killed by Herod. Jesus, upon hearing the news, tried to get away for some alone time, but the crowds pursued Him. Instead of sending them away, He had compassion on them and ministered to them. Now, we pick up in verse 15...

### **14:15-18 The Hungry Crowd**

After a full day of ministry, the disciples come to Jesus, telling Him to send the people away. You see, they were in a desolate and deserted place. It wasn't like they could just run over to Taco Bell and get some burritos.

But Jesus doesn't say, "You're right. We can't feed this many people." Instead, He tells them, "They don't need to leave. You just need to give them something to eat."

Well, even after searching the crowds for food, all they could come up with was a little boy who had five loaves of barley bread and two fish. This certainly wasn't going to do it. But Jesus seemed satisfied that it was enough.

### **14:19-21 Feeding The Five Thousand**

Jesus told the people to sit down on the grass and then blessed the food by giving thanks to God for it (John 6:11). He then began to break the loaves of bread. Miraculously, the bread and fish multiplied into being a full meal for five thousand men, plus the women and children who were there.

Saints, do you believe that Jesus is Someone who can provide for your needs today? The Bible tells us that...

**Phil. 4:19 ...God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

The Lord can provide for His followers wherever they are, regardless of how limited their resources are.

Remember what He taught us in the Sermon on the Mount:

**Matt. 6:31-33 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear**

**for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**

These people were fed because of two things: they were following Christ, and they had need. When we meet these two criteria, God will supply.

Notice too that while it was the Lord who was multiplying the loaves and fishes, it was the disciples who were instructed to take what the Lord gave them and distribute it. Oftentimes, I find that people are reluctant to give out. They don't have the time, they don't have the energy, they don't have the resources. But if only they would see this simple truth: The disciples gave out, and when the ministry was done, there were twelve basketfuls left - a full basket for each of them!

If we are faithful to distribute what God gives us, then He will always make sure that there is more than enough for us as well. We will always end up with more than we started with.

### **14:22 Sending The Disciples Away**

Both Matthew and Mark tell us that when the disciples had gathered their bread, Jesus sent them immediately away. Why? There are any number of reasons. But all that was left to do was to send the crowds away, and so He told them to get into the boat and go on ahead to Capernaum (John 6:17).

### **14:23 By Himself To Pray**

After the crowds had left, Jesus also took His needed alone time with His Heavenly Father. He went up on the mountain to pray by Himself. Many Christians have confessed to me that they just don't pray all that much. Sometimes it's because they don't see the need, other times they don't recognize any results, or they simply don't think that they have the time to spare to spend time in prayer.

I will be the first to say to you that I don't understand everything

there is to know about prayer. But I do know that it is absolutely necessary for us. Jesus here set the example for us that it is utterly necessary to pray. It had been a day of loss and disappointment, a day of physical effort and ministry outpouring. Now He climbs the mountain to spend the evening in prayer. This tells me that the busier we are, the more exhausted we become, and the more ministry we're doing, the more we absolutely need to expend the effort to pray.

### **14:24 A Contrary Wind**

Mark tell us that while Jesus was up on the mountaintop, He saw the disciples out in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. They were

**Mark 6:48 ...straining at the oars, for the wind was against them...**

### **14:25-27 Walking On The Sea**

In the days of the Roman Empire, the night was divided into four watches, from 6pm to 6am. It is somewhere between 3am and 6am when the disciples, battered by this terrible storm, see a figure approaching. Now, this isn't something that you expect to see at three in the morning when you're three or four miles from shore (John 6:19). They thought it was a ghost. The Greek word there is "FAN-tas-mah," from which we get our word "phantom." It means an appearance or an apparition. Their minds couldn't comprehend that it was an actual person walking on the water, because this was impossible. However, God is a God of the impossible:

**Luke 18:27 ..."The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."**

When Jesus saw how terrified they were to see Him, told them not to be afraid, that it was only Him.

### **14:28-29 Peter's Request**

You've got to admit that, despite his faults and failings, Peter is an amazing man. The storm was still raging when Peter made this incredible request:

**Matt. 14:28 “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”**

Jesus said, “Come on out, Peter!” And astonishingly, Peter stepped out of the boat in the midst of the wind and the waves! I believe that Peter’s literal step of faith should be an example to us all.

Many Christians live their lives afraid to step out of the boat. And so their requests of the Lord completely eliminate faith: “Lord, if it is You, then provide a concrete bridge between the boat and You!” “Lord, if it is you, then stop the storm and freeze the sea!” “Lord, if it is You, then You come over here and carry me out of the boat!”

The one who is faithful instead of fearful will instead pray,  
**Is. 6:8 ...”Here am I. Send me!”**

“I’m willing to get out of the boat, Lord. All you have to do is say the word!” Just make sure that before you step out, that the Lord has truly called you. Some people jump out in presumption, when He has not commanded them.

**14:30-33 Peter’s Trip**

While Peter was coming toward Jesus, he was fine. He was doing the impossible: walking on the water! But then Peter began to sink when he looked around at everything else. He lost faith and began to fear because of what he saw. That is why we are told to...

**2Cor. 5:7 ...walk by faith, not by sight—**

Peter’s doubt tripped him up, but still he knew to whom he must cry out: “Lord, save me!” Even after we step out of the boat, there may be times when we falter in faith and begin to sink. But as long as we know to cry out to Jesus, we’ll be caught and raised up.

**14:34-36 The Ministry Continues**

After getting to the other side, people gathered to Jesus to be ministered to. Notice too, that they also sent word to the surrounding areas. We certainly should follow this example.