

SON OF GOD

MATTHEW 14



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

Son of God: Matthew 14
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Matthew 14: Introduction

Following the death of John the Baptist, Jesus moves to demonstrate that He is the true Son of God and King of Israel by miracles and works clearly grounded in Old Testament revelation. He shows Himself to be Lord of all the elements of creation, and therefore the Son of God to be worshiped and obeyed.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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1 For Whom the Law?

Pray Psalm 19.12-14.

Who can understand *his* errors?
Cleanse me from secret *faults*.
Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Sing Psalm 19.12-14.

(St. Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))
Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight
be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

Read and meditate on Matthew 14.1-5.

Prepare.

1. Why was John put in prison?
2. Why did Herod keep him there, and not execute him?

Meditate.

Let's review what we have learned about John the Baptist. First, he preached a message of repentance from sin and unto good works, in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. This begs the question: How did John define sin?

Second, he captured the respect of all the people, who "counted him as a prophet."

Third, Jesus said that of those born of women – including Abraham, Moses, David, and all the prophets – none was greater than John the Baptist. He was accounted *at least* as great as the greatest saints of the Old Testament.

So why was John in prison? Because he preached the Law of God to the pagan king, Herod. Herod was not a Jew; he was of Edomite descent. The Romans knew how to humble and subjugate the people they ruled. Rather than give them a king of their own race, the Romans established an Edomite to rule over them – a people with historic ties to the Jews, but whom the Jews had come to despise (cf. Ps. 137.7). Puppet kings like Herod acknowledged only one law – the law of survival.

But that did not deter John from holding Herod accountable to the Law of God. He upbraided the king because he had taken his brother's wife for himself, in clear violation of the Law of God (cf. Lev. 18.16; 20.21). John understood that, from the very beginning, God intended the wisdom and beauty and love encoded in His Law to guide not only His people, but all the nations of the world (cf. Deut. 4.5-8; Mic. 4.1-5).

The world may not like the Law of God, but those who would be great in the Kingdom take their cues not from the world of men, but from the Word of God (Matt. 5.17-19).

Herod's folly is evident in his not being willing to be held accountable to God and His Law. Where the Law of God is concerned, do we stand with Herod, or with John and Jesus?

Reflect.

1. What did Jesus say about the Law of God in Matthew 5.17-19? What does this require of you?
2. According to Matthew 24.12, what happens when people neglect or scorn the Law of God? How can you see this in Herod?
3. John preached the Law of God as the defining standard for sin. Can we know and repent of sin apart from knowing and following the Law of God (cf. Rom. 7.7)?

John the Baptist, who had come in the spirit and power of Elijah, with the same authority whereby the latter had rebuked Ahab and Jezebel, upbraided Herod and Herodias because they had entered into an unlawful marriage. He did so because it is not lawful to take the wife of one's own living brother. John preferred to incur the king's anger rather than, through fawning, be unmindful of God's commandments. Jerome (347-420), Commentary on Matthew 2.14.4

Guide me today by Your Commandments, O God, that I may love you by obeying Your Law as I...

Pray Psalm 19.7-11.

Ask the Lord to line your path and direct your steps today according to the perfect, sure, wise, right, pure, and righteous Law of the Lord.

Sing Psalm 19.7-11.

Psalm 19.7-11 (St. Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure.

The simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.

God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;

He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.

His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.

O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet.

Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

2 One Sorry Murderer

Pray Psalm 53.5, 6.

There they are in great fear

Where no fear was,

For God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you;

You have put *them* to shame,

Because God has despised them.

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

When God brings back the captivity of His people,

Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Sing Psalm 53.5, 6.

(Leoni: [*The God of Abraham Praise*](#))

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.

Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects!

Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,

and let salvation's Word resound from us again!

Read Matthew 14.1-12; meditate on verses 6-12.

Prepare.

1. Why was Herod "sorry"?

2. Why did Herod have John murdered?

Meditate.

Herod was "sorry", all right, and not just because he no longer had John the Baptist to amuse him.

Herod is a study in the blinding power of sin. Sin takes us captive to the lie, which says there is no God, and we all just have to do the best we can with whatever truth works for us (Rom. 1.18-32).

The lie then makes us stupid, and stupidity can make us dangerous.

The lie makes a person serve himself. Under the influence of the lie, people do whatever they think will gratify their needs or be in line with their interests. If they have to use or impress others, well, no matter. Herod wanted to impress his pals, so he used his wife's daughter to excite their prurient interests. Then, to further impress his guests, he made an outrageous promise to his step-daughter, without thinking of any consequences that might ensue. He had to be well into his cups, I'm thinking, even to offer the girl "whatever she might ask" (Mark adds, "up to half my kingdom" – Mk. 6.23).

This was a moment Herodias had been waiting for; now she would get her revenge on John. Having consulted with her mother, therefore, the daughter returns and asks for John's head on a platter.

Well, Herod certainly wasn't expecting that! But, what's a guy to do? He had to save face with his guests, after all. And John, well, he wasn't exactly indispensable. So Herod sent an executioner to behead John and to give his head to the girl.

"And the king was sorry..." You can say that again. He was one of the sorriest people in all of Scripture, and so is everyone who chooses to follow the lie of Satan rather than the truth of God, His

Law, and our Lord Jesus Christ. All around us are people just like Herod – trapped in the lie, calculating how to advantage themselves and further their interests, and one step away from doing the next stupid – and possibly dangerous – thing.

But don't despise them; pray for them. Show them the love of Jesus. Tell the Good News of the truth that sets us free (Jn. 8.32). But don't be surprised if some of them do or say something outrageous in reply. Just keep on keeping on in Jesus and the Good News. Some of these lie-bound, stupid people are going to believe. Just as you and I did (Rom. 5.10, 11).

Reflect.

1. Are Christians susceptible to being drawn aside to the lie? Explain.
2. How can we know when the lie, rather than the Law of God, is directing our choices and decisions?
3. What are the best ways of keeping from falling prey to the lie?

But when Herod saw the evil actually ensuing, "he was sorry," it is said. Yet in the first instance he had put him in prison. Why then is he sorry? Such is the nature of virtue. Even among the wicked admiration and praises are its due..
John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 48.4*

Lead me in the paths of truth and righteousness today, O Lord, so that I...

Pray Psalm 53.1-5.

Pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field, that what they know about God – and they all know something (Rom. 1.18-22) – will cause them to seek Him and open them to hear the Good News.

Sing Psalm 53.1-5.

Psalm 53.1-5 (Leoni: [*The God of Abraham Praise*](#))

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God at all!"
Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.
Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.
None understands the Word of God or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God's grace?
The Church they hate with passion and seek not God's face.
Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.
And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

3 A Test in a Deserted Place

Pray Psalm 138.1-3.

I will praise You with my whole heart;
Before the gods I will sing praises to You.
I will worship toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your name
For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.
In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
And made me bold *with* strength in my soul.

Sing Psalm 138.1-3.

(Regent Square: [*Angels from the Realms of Glory*](#))

I will give You thanks and praise You, God of gods, with all my heart.
I will bow before Your temple, grateful praise to You impart.
For Your Name and for Your glory, You have magnified Your Word!

Read Matthew 14.1-21; meditate on verses 13-21.

Prepare.

1. How did Jesus show His compassion for the people (cf. also Mk. 6.34)?
2. What does this story tell us about the sovereign power of Jesus?

Meditate.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, Jesus will demonstrate in extraordinary ways that He is Who He claims to be: God, and the Son of God.

Upon learning of John's death, Jesus felt the need to be alone. So he departed by boat to go to a deserted place, to be alone with His Father (v. 13). The people heard about this, and they followed Him to His place of retreat. We might think Jesus was annoyed by this; He was not. When He saw the assembling crowds, He had compassion on them. Mark tells us that He first began to teach them many things (Mk. 6.34). This must have gone on throughout the better part of the day.

But when evening came, the disciples, thinking of the wellbeing of the people, urged Jesus to send them away, so they could find something to eat (v. 15). Jesus' reply startled the disciples. We know this from Philip's response when Jesus asked where they might find bread to feed the people (Jn. 6.7). Philip said, in effect, the resources aren't there. Pop quiz, Philip: F.

Andrew weighed in next: A kid has some loaves and fish, but that won't even begin to feed this throng. Andrew: F.

How many times, in how many ways, does Jesus "test" us during the day, giving us opportunity after opportunity to look to Him, rest in Him, rejoice in Him, and go forward in faith? How many pop quizzes do we fail each day, because we forget that Jesus is God?

Jesus took the available resources in hand, arranged the people in groups of fifty for easier serving (Lk. 9.14), and began to do what He as God does every day: create the world anew. He began to

break the bread and fish, and He kept breaking them and giving them to His disciples to pass around, until everyone had all they could eat. Then His disciples gathered up leftovers more than the initial offering (v. 20). Five thousand men, plus women and children, ate until they were full, as the Creator of all things fed them from His compassionate heart.

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Creator. Jesus is the sovereign God. As amazing as this miracle of the loaves and fishes is, it's the sort of thing Jesus does every day. The vast creation has no inherent power to keep itself going or even to continue in existence. As Jonathan Edwards explained, everything that is continues to exist because, in a certain sense, Jesus creates it new every moment, speaking to and upholding the entire cosmos by His eternal Word of power (Heb. 1.3).

For He is God.

Reflect.

1. What does it mean to have compassion on someone? How can we tell when we have compassion on others?
2. What would be some examples of ways Jesus “tests” us throughout the day, to encourage us to trust Him? How can we make sure we’re ready for these quizzes, and that we will pass them?
3. How does Jesus want to use you to bring His blessings to people today? Are you ready?

Although this was a deserted place, he that is here is ready to feed the world. The one who is speaking to you is not subject to time, even though “the day is now over.” John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 49.1*

Lord, help me to trust You in every situation, especially today as I...

Pray Psalm 138.4-8.

Praise God for His daily provision: He will take care of all that concerns you. Thank Him for His mercy and faithfulness.

Sing Psalm 138.4-8.

Psalm 138.4-8 (Regent Square: [*Angels from the Realms of Glory*](#))

On the day I called You answered, made me bold within my soul.
When I walk in troubled places, You revive and make me whole.
For Your hand will gently shield me, and my fearsome foes control.

All the kings of earth will praise You when Your words of truth they hear.
Of Your ways, of Your great glory, gladly they will loudly cheer.
For the proud shall not approach You, yet You hold the lowly dear.

Your Right Hand will save and keep me; all I need You will supply.
For Your love is everlasting, reaching from beyond the sky.
You will not forsake or leave me; You will save me when I cry.

4 Lord of the Elements

Pray Psalm 29.1, 2.

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Sing Psalm 29.1, 2.

(Toulon: [*I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art*](#))

Give praise to God, you children of the earth!
Tell of His strength, proclaim His glorious worth!
Give to the Lord the glory due His Name!
Worship in holiness; His grace proclaim!

Read Matthew 14.1-27; meditate on verses 22-27.

Prepare.

1. How did the disciples react to seeing Jesus walking on the sea?
2. How did Jesus put them at ease?

Meditate.

Feeding the multitudes with a few loaves and fish was pretty impressive. It would have been especially impressive for the disciples, who knew both the resources they'd begun with, and the leftovers they had collected afterwards. They had seen Jesus creating food, like God had created the heavens and the earth – out of nothing. We can be sure this would have made a firm impression on their minds, suggesting that Jesus was *very like God*, if not even perhaps God Himself.

To emphasize and punctuate that point, Jesus sent His disciples onto the sea, while He took some time – at last – to be alone with His Father. As the disciples made their way across the sea, a storm arose, making progress difficult, if not uncertain.

Then, suddenly, the disciples saw Jesus coming toward them, “walking on the sea”! They thought He was a ghost, and cried out in fear (v. 26).

In his book, *Reading Backwards*, Richard B. Hays makes an important observation about Job 9.8, which reads in the NKJV, “He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea...” Hays explains that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, has Job 9.8 as follows: “who alone stretched out heaven and walks upon the sea as upon dry ground.” This verse is situated in a passage that magnifies the greatness of God and His power over all the elements of the vast cosmos. Its purpose in the story of Job is to strike a note of warning and fear in the hearts of those who presume on the Lord.

In our passage, Jesus demonstrated without doubt that He is that God Who “walks upon the sea as upon dry ground.” But instead of seeking to terrorize His frightened disciples, Jesus meant them to be at peace: “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” He intended for them to make the connection with Job and other passages in the Old Testament showing that God rules the waters of the sea. He wanted them to glimpse His great power, His divine majesty and might. And then He

wanted them to rest in that power and be at peace.

Jesus invites us into the shelter of His divine power as well. He is the Lord of the elements. Every day, when we look out on the vast expanse of creation – the sky, clouds, rains, rivers, towering trees, elegant birds, and fearsome storms – we see Jesus at work, upholding the creation by His Word of power (Heb. 1.3). The scope of His rule is all-comprehending; the enormity of His might is infinite; and the glory of His beauty, wisdom, and order weighs heavily all around.

And He says to us through that witness of the creation, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

Reflect.

1. Why did Jesus want His disciples to see Him as Lord of the elements?
2. How can we see Jesus in the various aspects of the creation?
3. Why can we be of good cheer and unafraid in the face of Jesus’ power and glory?

*Now he is leading them into a greater degree of challenge. Now he is not even present to them. He has departed. In midsea he permits a storm to arise. This was all for their training, that they might not look for some easy hope of preservation from any earthly source. John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.1**

I don’t need to fear anything because of You, Lord Jesus, so help me today to...

Pray Psalm 29.3-11.

Rejoice in the Lord’s sovereignty and power, and commit your day to serving Him in all you do.

Sing Psalm 29.3-11.

Psalm 29.3-11 (Toulon: [*I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art*](#))

Over the waters, over thunder’s roll,
God’s voice creation’s mighty pow’rs controls!
Cedars collapse at His majestic Word.
Nations are shaken by our mighty Lord!

God speaks and lightning streaks across the sky.
By His decree He shakes the desert dry.
Speak, Lord, and life to beasts and men is giv’n.
Forests dissolve, and glory rings in heav’n.

Sovereign, the Lord sat o’er the raging flood.
Sovereign forever rules our gracious God!
God will His people bless with strength and peace:
Lord, may Your holy Word to us increase!

5 Watch Where You're Going!

Pray Psalm 138.7, 8.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Sing Psalm 138.7, 8.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Your Right Hand will save and keep me; all I need You will supply.
For Your love is everlasting, reaching from beyond the sky.
You will not forsake or leave me; You will save me when I cry.

Read Matthew 14.1-33; meditate on verses 28-33.

Prepare.

1. What did Peter want the Lord to do for him?
2. Why did Peter begin to sink?

Meditate.

This is one of my top ten passages in all of Scripture, and that for lots of reasons.

First, it teaches us how we *should* live. Second, it teaches us how we *should not* live. What more could you ask?

Who can understand Peter? Sometimes I wish I had more of Peter in my DNA. At other times – his denial of Jesus, his balking before the Gentile believers in Antioch – I want the Lord to remove those strains from my soul. Peter is a lot like most of us. But he is also an extraordinary disciple, one from whom we can learn many things.

Peter's request to the Lord is simply astounding. Can you hear the other disciples: "What? Are you crazy?" "No, Peter, no!" "Sit down, sit down, you're rocking the boat!" Would you be getting up with Peter, or hunkering down with the eleven?

I can also imagine Jesus smiling and reaching out His hand in response to Peter's request: "Attaboy! Come on!"

Peter steps over the side of the boat, and the water is solid under his feet. His eyes fixed on Jesus, he begins walking on the water – right foot, left foot; right foot, left foot. His goal is to get to Jesus, and he perhaps reached out his hand to take the Lord's.

But then the other Peter shows up. Taking his eyes off Jesus, Peter focuses instead on the wind and the waves. They were "boisterous" – don't you love that word? Peter, moments ago the most confident man alive, began to be afraid. And he also began to sink. Can you feel the water, grasping

his ankles, reaching his knees, clinging to his thighs! Desperate, Peter cries out, “Lord, save me!”

We should all be so desperate all the time.

So Jesus grabs him, and together they go back into the boat. But not without a sharp rebuke: “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” How do you suppose the other disciples felt, hearing Peter rebuked like that?

Well, whatever they thought or felt, it didn’t last very long. As the wind ceased – not died down, *ceased*, as in “Stop that boisterousness and sit down!” – the disciples all fell around Jesus in worship, and testified as one, “Truly, You are the Son of God.”

Even Judas? Yes, even Judas. Talk is cheap.

Peter’s glory and near-downfall had the same cause. He was looking where he was going. As long as he was looking to Jesus, he walked on the water. When he looked around at the uncertain, changing, boisterous wind and sea, he began to succumb to it.

How will you live for Christ today? Looking to Him, or looking at the world and its vicissitudes and troubles?

Look to Jesus, and watch where you’re going – always.

Reflect.

1. How should we look to Jesus in our day? What should we expect from doing so?
2. Which Peter tends most often to show up in your life? Explain.
3. What would it mean for you to walk on the water toward Jesus today?

Peter is attended by strength equal to disdain death itself. His timidity, however, gives an inkling of his weakness in the face of future temptation. For though he ventured forth, he began to sink. Through the feebleness of the flesh and the fear of death, he is brought to the point of denial. But he cries out and asks the Lord to save him. That cry is the groan of his repentance. Hilary of Poitiers (315-367), On Matthew 14.15

Lord, help me keep my eyes on You today as I...

Pray Psalm 138.1-6.

How will you trust the Lord to let you walk on water today?

Sing Psalm 138.1-6.

Psalm 138.1-6 (Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

I will give You thanks and praise You, God of gods, with all my heart.
I will bow before Your temple, grateful praise to You impart.
For Your Name and for Your glory, You have magnified Your Word!

On the day I called You answered, made me bold within my soul.
When I walk in troubled places, You revive and make me whole.
For Your hand will gently shield me, and my fearsome foes control.

All the kings of earth will praise You when Your words of truth they hear.
Of Your ways, of Your great glory gladly they will loudly cheer.
For the proud shall not approach You, yet You hold the lowly dear.

6 Recognized, Rushed

Pray Psalm 5.11, 12.

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.
For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

Sing Psalm 5.11, 12.

(Angel's Story: [O Jesus, I Have Promised](#))

Let those rejoice who seek You and shelter 'neath Your wing.
Their tongues shall rise to speak to Your praise; Your grace they sing.
Your people You will bless, Lord, all those who to You yield.
Preserve them with Your best Word, and guard them like a shield.

Read Matthew 14.1-36; meditate on verses 34-36.

Prepare.

1. How did the people of this region respond to Jesus' arrival?
2. What did Jesus do for them?

Meditate.

Two important points should be observed in this brief account of the healings in Gennesaret.

First, they continue to add to the accumulating evidence that Jesus is God. Healing power flows from Him to all who avail themselves of it. Jesus demonstrates His power to restore people from the ravages of sin, and this is a power that comes only from God. Jesus healed people so that He might be recognized as God.

We see, in the second place, that people rush to Jesus for healing for themselves, their friends, or their loved ones. Whereas the disciples worshiped Jesus and confessed Him as God when He joined them in the boat, the people of Gennesaret seemed interested in Jesus only for what He could do for them. Here is no indication of worship, no record of praise, no reports of people repenting of sin, and no accounts of people testifying that Jesus is the Son of God.

The people of Gennesaret recognized Jesus as One Who could make their lives a little better, but they did not – at least, we have no record of it – recognize Him as God.

Which raises the question: Do we? If we truly recognize Jesus as God, what should be the proper response? Is it merely to rush to Him to get whatever we can? Or is it to adore, worship, and proclaim Him as God and the Son of God? What does our daily walk with Jesus indicate about how we recognize Him?

Reflect.

1. How should we respond in recognizing Jesus as God?

2. Jesus continued doing good for people, even when they failed to respond as they should. Why did He do this? Does He do this yet today? Explain.

3. We continue to need Jesus to bring healing to our lives. In what ways? How should we approach Him for such healing?

They offered to God the remaining persons among them who were feeble and ill. These offered persons wanted to touch the hem of his garment to be made whole through faith. As from the hem of the entire garment, the whole power of the Holy Spirit came forth from our Lord Jesus Christ. Hilary of Poitiers (315-367), On Matthew 14.19

Heal my soul, Lord, and turn me from all my sin, so that I...

Pray Psalm 5.1-8.

Pray for the day ahead, that you will find Jesus sufficient and powerful for all your needs.

Sing Psalm 5.1-8.

Psalm 5.1-8 (Angel's Story: [O Jesus, I Have Promised](#))

O Lord, attend and hear me, consider how I groan.

Receive my cries and near be, and love me as Your own.

By morning, Lord I seek You, for You will hear my voice.

My every need You speak to, and make my soul rejoice!

In sin You take no pleasure; no evil dwells with You.

Vain boasts You will not treasure, nor those who boasting do.

Sin kindles Your hot anger, You crush all those who lie.

The violent live in danger of Your all-searching eye.

O Lord, Your lovingkindness escorts me in this place.

I bow before Your highness and praise Your glorious grace!

In righteous ways You guide me; Your pathway I will know.

No good will be denied me as I with Jesus go.

7 Two Kings

Pray Psalm 132.6, 7.

Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah;
We found it in the fields of the woods.
Let us go into His tabernacle;
Let us worship at His footstool.

Sing Psalm 132.6, 7.

(Finlandia: [*Be Still My Soul*](#))

The word throughout the chosen nation spread,
to Ephrata, and in the fields of Jaar:
“Now let us go,” the faithful people said,
“and worship where our Savior’s dwellings are!
Around His footstool let our worship spread.
Come, gather to Him, all from near and far!”

Read and meditate on Matthew 14.1-36.

Prepare.

1. Which two kings are in view in this chapter? In what ways do they differ?
2. Over how much does Jesus rule as King?

Meditate.

Matthew 14 unfolds a remarkable and subtle transition which, like a watermark on paper, creates a background for what Matthew has written here.

It is the story of two kings, two administrations, and two testaments. The first king is Herod, who oversaw an administration of oppression, pragmatism, and scorn for God. He ruled as a puppet of Caesar, who ruled as a puppet of Satan. Herod wielded an earthly sword, but not unto justice and righteousness. His was a self-serving and sorry administration.

The second King is our Lord Jesus, Who rules a Kingdom of life, grace, healing, and restoration. He has defeated and bound Satan, and is now taking back for Himself all that is rightfully His. Jesus wields the Sword of the Spirit to give life and cause all creation to obey the will of God.

With the death of John, the Old Testament, as it were, reaches its final episode. The Old Testament Law – which, John insisted, applied even to Herod – was powerless to save. But saving was never its purpose. Bringing the blessings of grace to those who *are* saved was and remains its valid role. But for the Law to fulfill its mighty purpose, a new administration is required, under a new King. With the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus recapitulates and supersedes the manna of the wilderness, holding out the promise of boundless blessings to come. With Immanuel, the New Testament launches, abounding in grace and renewing power.

By demonstrating His power over wind and sea, Jesus showed that God had truly come among men, and though men don’t always seek Him for the right motives, still His grace abounds to those who are yet in the bondage of sin and its effects. A new administration has begun, in which the grace of God is the currency and His glory is the motif, driving force, and goal.

Reflect.

1. How would you describe the power Jesus exercises in His Kingdom? What is its nature, scope, and effect?
2. Who has a place in the new Kingdom and administration Jesus came to launch?
3. How can we make sure that our motives in following Jesus are what they should be?

*The weakness of those who, not knowing that Christ is God, desired to make a nearer approach to him, was endured for a time. Now that he fills heaven and earth with the sweet savor of his grace, we must embrace—not with hands or eyes, but by faith—the salvation which he offers to us from heaven. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Matthew 14.34**

Jesus, You are God and King, and I am Your child and servant! Send me today for Your Kingdom's sake to...

Pray Psalm 132.11-18.

Thank God for Jesus, David's Son and our King, and offer up your day to Him in prayer.

Sing Psalm 132.11-18.

Psalm 132.11-18 (Finlandia: [*Be Still My Soul*](#))

Remember, Lord, the oath You swore to David;

do not turn back, do not deny Your Word:

“One of your sons, with your throne I will favor,

and He shall keep My cov'nant evermore,

and walk within My testimonies ever;

thus He shall ever rule as Israel's Lord.”

God dwells among us, and He will forever,
to meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.

He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior,
and made us His eternal resting-place.

His foes are banished from His presence ever,
but we shall reign with Him before His face.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What do we learn from the story of John and Herod about the Law of God?
2. Over which elements of creation did Jesus show Himself to be Lord and King in this chapter?
3. As we see it in this chapter, what kind of Kingdom and administration did Jesus launch?
4. What is the proper response to the grace and power of Jesus?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 14.1-36? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.