

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 26

THE TRUTH OF HIS ACTIONS



MATTHEW; MARK; JOHN



MEMORY VERSES

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she told him, ‘I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.’”

—John 11:25-27



JESUS PROVIDES

CORE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 14:13-21

CONTEXT

Each Gospel writer told the story of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit inspired them to put their own unique emphasis on it. Mark focused on the action. Luke focused on detailed, eyewitness accounts. Matthew narrated Jesus's life by alternating between a specific event and teaching. Matthew 14 begins with John the Baptist's disciples informing Jesus of his execution at the command of King Herod. Jesus then withdrew to a desolate place, presumably to grieve, but the crowds followed Him. Instead of frustration, Jesus responded with compassion, and the people witnessed His power to provide.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.

As you examine Matthew 14:13-21:

- Take comfort that Jesus's compassion and love motivate His actions.
- Give Jesus glory because He is "able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many
Parables (Matthew 13:1-53)

Jesus Walks on Water
(Matthew 14:22-33)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Matthew 14:13-21)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions
(Matthew 15:21-31)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Matthew 14:1-12

☐ **Day 2:** Matthew 14:13-21

☐ **Day 3:** Mark 6:14-29

☐ **Day 4:** Mark 6:30-44

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 13:1-35

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 100



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:13-17

JESUS ACTS WITH COMPASSION AND LOVE IN HEALING AND PROVIDING FOR HIS PEOPLE.

Underline all the reasons the disciples wanted to send away the crowd.

13 When Jesus heard about it, he withdrew from there by boat to a remote place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed him on foot from the towns. **14** When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, had compassion on them, and healed their sick. **15** When evening came, the disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” **16** “They don’t need to go away,” Jesus told them. “You give them something to eat.” **17** “But we only have five loaves and two fish here,” they said to him.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

STEWARDSHIP: God’s intention for mankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work (Matthew 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matthew 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God’s generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have (Proverbs 3:9), regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2), sacrificially (Matthew 12:41-44), humbly (Matthew 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.



Jesus wanted to be alone, either grieved by the death of John the Baptist, wary of Herod's interest in Him, or perhaps both. Yet despite His desire for silence and solitude, the desperation of the crowds wouldn't allow it. What was a relatively short trip by boat for Him and His disciples was matched by the crowds taking the long way around on foot. Jesus couldn't escape the mass of people. But rather than be annoyed by the presence of the crowds, Jesus had compassion on them. This compassion was a visceral emotion, a pulling on the heart strings. Jesus cared.

Jesus had compassion for the crowd and healed their sick, but the disciples eventually noticed some logistical issues. It was late, and the people hadn't eaten. Dispersing the crowds would take time, and the nearest village was a distance away. The disciples had no idea how the crowd of people would eat, and they didn't want the responsibility of trying to feed them. They saw their situation through the eyes of reality: lots of people and little food on hand.

What challenges keep you from showing compassion like Jesus?

Jesus responded to the disciples' logical concerns with what sounded like a problem-solving challenge: "You give them something to eat" (v. 16). Jesus involved the disciples in what was to come by putting the initial responsibility on their shoulders. Again, the disciples looked around at the reality of their situation and saw it for what it was: "We only have five loaves and two fish here" (v. 17). The disciples were being truthful. The cost to feed this crowd would be over half a year's salary (John 6:7). Obviously, more than five thousand people could not be fed with five loaves and two fish.

Yet for all their human logic, the disciples failed to take into account Jesus's power: Jesus had healed diseases, cast out demons, and calmed a storm at sea (see Matthew 8–9). Here, Jesus was involving the disciples in His solution to the problem at hand, but He would supply what they needed. Jesus wanted His disciples to understand their role and acknowledge that He could provide for them even with the little they had. Jesus wanted His disciples to see reality through the eyes of faith.

What might having eyes of faith mean for your present reality?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:18-21

JESUS CAN PROVIDE ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT WE NEED.

Circle descriptions of the extent to which Jesus provided for the people and His disciples.

18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. **19** Then he commanded the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. **20** Everyone ate and was satisfied. They picked up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces. **21** Now those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“One basket for each apostle: . . . This was to manifest and magnify the miracle, and to show that the provision Christ makes for those who are his is not bare and scanty, but rich and plenteous.”¹

—Matthew Henry (1662–1714)

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.



With the five loaves of bread and two fish in hand, Jesus said a blessing, thanking God for the miracle He was about to perform. Matthew would have expected his readers to recall the Old Testament connections for this miracle. First, the miracle would have called to mind the manna in the wilderness that was announced by Moses. God led the Israelites through the barren desert without food so they would learn to trust Him. In response to their hunger, God promised to “rain bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4). Like the Israelites, the crowds were in a desolate place without food, and Jesus miraculously provided bread.

Second, Matthew alluded to the story of Elisha recounted in 2 Kings 4:42-44. After a man brought twenty loaves of bread, Elisha told his servant to feed the people. The servant, like the disciples, saw only the small amount of bread compared to the large number of mouths to feed. But Elisha commanded him: “Give it to the people to eat . . . for this is what the Lord says: ‘They will eat, and they will have some left over’” (v. 43), and it happened as the Lord promised. Sound familiar?

Why do you think Matthew wanted his readers to remember these stories from Israel’s history?

It would be miraculous enough for the five loaves and two fish to barely feed the crowd, but they were “satisfied,” or full (Matthew 14:20). And then there were leftovers—twelve baskets full—a number generally used for completeness, like the twelve tribes and twelve disciples. Jesus doesn’t provide the bare minimum—He satisfies; He fills; He completes.

Just as this miraculous feeding recalled the past, it also foreshadowed the future. Both in the Old Testament (Isaiah 25:6-10) and in the New Testament (Luke 14:12-24; Revelation 19:6-9), the kingdom of God is compared to a feast. Jesus gave the crowd—and us—a glimpse of what His kingdom will be like: satisfaction, and even more, salvation.

How have you experienced satisfaction in Christ?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

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Jesus is a provider, providing salvation from sin and death.

FROM SCARCITY TO SURPLUS

Read Matthew 14:13-21. Write down the problems as the disciples saw them. Then record what Jesus did to overcome the obstacles and meet the need.

WHAT THE DISCIPLES SAW

WHAT JESUS DID

MATTHEW 14:13-17

MATTHEW 14:18-21

Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to bring what they had, even though it wasn't enough?

Where do you tend to see "what the disciples saw" in your own circumstances?

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.



HEAD

What are some needs that you should entrust to God's care?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

✕ ————— ✕

Read and pray through Psalm 100. Praise God as your loving Creator and Sustainer (vv. 3-5), and pray for opportunities and a heart of dependence to serve the Lord with gladness (v. 2).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What keeps you from trusting God to provide for all your needs?



HANDS

How will you make yourself available this week to be used by God to meet the needs around you?

