

Christ Church

## “A High View of God”

Passage: Matthew 14-15

Main Idea: Jesus prepares us for life, for suffering, and for death by raising our view of Him

Doctrine: Faith/Sovereignty of God

### **PRAYER**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Focus of study this year is Gospel of *Matthew*

- “Gospel” simply means Good News = good news that God has done something about our sin so we can be forgiven & reconciled to Him
- Central figure of Gospel is Jesus: One God sent to live a perfect life which we could not do; die in our place to pay penalty for our sin; rise again as proof God accepted His sacrifice & we are forgiven

Entire Bible is centered on Jesus & Gospel – why we look for it as we study; why we talk about it every week in groups & in Closing Talk

- “*We should go to Bible like shepherds & wise men did, to find Jesus*”
- So, our goal as we study *Matthew* is that you would find Jesus

*New Testament* opens with 4 gospels; 4 accounts of Jesus’ life & ministry & death – each has different focus & purpose for writing

- *Matthew* is longest gospel; written to Jewish people who knew Old Testament very well; why contains many references to OT
- That’s why placed first in NT = provides bridge between OT & NT
- Focus of *Matthew* is on Jesus as King; long-awaited Messiah promised by God to sit on throne of David & to reign forever
- That’s why *Matthew* is only gospel writer to include visit of magi, kings from east, coming to worship new King, as saw in *Matthew 2*

*Matthew 3 & 4*, Jesus goes public; begins His ministry by being baptized by John & openly declared by God to be His Son

- Overcomes temptations in wilderness to prove He is Perfect Son of God – baptism & temptations launch Jesus into 3 years of ministry

*Matthew 5-7*, Jesus astonished crowds by His *words* - Sermon on Mt

*Matthew 8 & 9*, Jesus astonished crowds by His *works* - miracles

*Matthew 10* Jesus taught cost of following Him was denying ourselves

Matthew 11 & 12, in spite of what they had seen & heard, the religious leaders openly begin to oppose Jesus, AND the majority of Jews rejected Jesus as their King & Promised Messiah

Matthew 13, because of their rejection, Jesus turned to a different kind of teaching = Parables; designed to *reveal* Kingdom truths to believers, & to *conceal* truths from unbelievers

Matthew 14 begins with death of John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner

- John was Jesus' cousin, so his death saddened Jesus – but more
- Think John's death also reminded Jesus of His own upcoming death, which Jesus begins to tell His disciples about in Chapter 16
- So, in these 2 chapters, Matthew 14 & 15, we sense an urgency in Jesus to prepare His disciples for what was coming
- Way Jesus did that is by raising their view of Him; same with us

**Main Idea:** Jesus prepares us for life, for suffering, and for death by raising our view of Him

Spotlight in these 2 chapters is on Jesus & Gospel

- Not lessons about giving Jesus our lunch, or learning be bold like Peter & step out of our boat
- Not lessons in having more faith, but having a higher view of God

Faith is NOT something we produce; it results from getting to know God more & more - not simply in our heads, but experiencing Jesus in nitty-gritty parts of our daily lives - what we see in Matthew 14 & 15

- So, it's not surprising that our outline focuses on Jesus

## **Outline**

- I. Jesus is Provision (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39)
- II. Jesus is Protection (Matthew 14:22-33)
- III. Jesus is Power (Matthew 15:1-31)

Open your Scripture Journal to Matthew 14:13

## **I. JESUS IS PROVISION (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39)**

After John's death, Jesus wanted to be alone in his grief, but crowds wouldn't allow that – very convicting to me

- Do you, like me, get frustrated when people interrupt your plans?
- A high view of God, believing God is sovereign over your day & over people's interruptions, changes how we respond to them

Jesus had compassion on crowd, & His compassion led Him to action

- Gospel picture – God's compassion for us led Him to do something
- So, when it was dinnertime, the disciples said to Jesus, "*Send the people away to buy food for themselves*"
- I love Jesus' response, "You feed them"; John's account says Jesus responded in this way to *test* the disciples
- God commands us to do what we can't do all the time; "*love Me with heart, soul, mind, strength & neighbor as yourself*"; can you do that?
- "Be kind & forgive others; don't lie, steal, or cheat; put away bitterness & anger; submit to husband" = *tests*
- Will we admit we can't & depend on Jesus & power of Holy Spirit to do it? Will we pull up bootstraps & try harder, or just give up?

Not that we disregard the commands in Bible – they are what God expects of us; but, like with disciples, these commands are invitations

- Jesus says, "I know you can't; depend on Me & watch what I can do" = Gospel in daily life – admitting we're not enough & coming to Jesus not just to get to heaven but for everything we need every day
- So, like He does with us when we turn to Him, Jesus is going to raise disciples view of Him by showing them what He can do

Takes a little boy's lunch of 5 loaves of bread & 2 small fish & feeds 5,000 men + women & children (possibly 25,000 people)

- Don't focus on "5" & "2" – significant only because such small amount – "*Our nothing is really nothing & not a little something*"
- Story points to sufficiency of Jesus; He is our *Provision*
- Lesson is that we can do nothing apart from Jesus; and Jesus not only provides everything we need – He provides more than enough
- More than enough love for husband; patience with kids; energy for long, busy days – Jesus always works in "more"

Feeding of 5,000 in Matthew 14 was in Israel (Jews); feeding of 4,000 in Matthew 15 was in region that was largely Gentile

- Picture of Gospel = what Jesus did to provide for Jews is what He does to provide for Gentiles
- Look past miracles to what they're teaching about Jesus & Gospel

- Jesus is preparing His disciples for His soon suffering & death; & for their own suffering & death, by raising their view of Him (US)
- High view of God not only prepares us for suffering & death, but also prepares us for our daily, routine lives

## **II. JESUS IS PROTECTION (Matthew 14:22-33)**

Jesus follows test of *Provision* with test of *Protection*

- 14:22: “Immediately Jesus made disciples get into the boat & go before Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee & storm came up”
- Jesus sent disciples into storm on purpose = high view of God
- God is sovereign over everything; He controls little things like not having enough food & big things like life-threatening storms
- God does everything, & everything God does belongs = purposeful
- God orders every circumstance of our lives with meticulous care

Like disciples, God loves us enough to take us to places we don’t want to go (storms) in order to reveal Himself & raise our view of Him

- “Jesus led His disciples into storm not to sink but to shape them; not to drown but to disciple them” – that’s what He does in our lives too

When Jesus came to disciples walking on the water in middle of storm, they were naturally frightened, but Jesus said in 14:26: “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

- Multiple times in Bible God says, “Do not fear”; but He never says, “Don’t fear because you’re not gonna drown; don’t fear because it’s not cancer; don’t fear because your husband will come back; don’t fear because your child will be saved; don’t fear because your bills will be paid”
- He says, “Don’t fear because I am with you”
- Jesus’ presence removes fear, even if circumstances don’t change
- That’s not really very comforting unless we love Jesus more than we love your life, or health, or comfort, or husband, or children

That’s whole point of Matthew = Jesus is the Son of God; the Promised King & Messiah; Jesus is all you need; He is *Provision* & *Protection*

- Sovereignty of God over everything in our lives & world; the abiding presence of Jesus in our lives, is only good news if we have a high view of God – that’s whole point of storms, to raise our view of Him

We're going to see in rest of *Matthew* that Peter needed his view of Jesus raised for what was coming, so *Matthew* includes account of Peter walking on water to Jesus

- And as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus, he succeeded
- As soon as he looked down & around, he began to sink
- That's when Peter expresses gospel in 3 little words, "*Lord, save me*"

Gospel is admitting our need, crying out to Jesus, & He saves us

- When we're drowning, we don't need a lecture on how to swim – we need a Savior; we need a Rescuer; we need Jesus
- Not just to get us to heaven; to get us through every day = through doctor's diagnosis; through dirty diapers & difficult people & demanding bosses

Jesus rebukes Peter for his "*little faith*"; some people take that & tell you to just have more faith - but it's not the size of your faith, Jesus said faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains

- The issue is not the size of your faith but the size of your God
- That's why Jesus prepares us for life, for suffering, & for death by raising our view of Him
- That's why Jesus walked on the water - to raise disciples view of Him; to show them that very thing they feared (storm) was only an opportunity for them to experience His *Protection* (US)

Climax of story is when Jesus & Peter get into boat & the wind stops; focus isn't on Peter but on Jesus – what does this tell us about Jesus?

- Verse 33, disciples responded to what they'd experienced by worshipping Jesus; said, "*Truly You are the Son of God*" – view of Jesus was raised
- "*They were entirely taken up with Jesus*" – is that true of us?

Jesus is Provision – Jesus is Protection – Jesus is Power

### **III. JESUS IS POWER (Matthew 15:1-31)**

15:1-20 focuses on *Jesus' Power* to transform people on inside

- Jesus rebukes religious leaders for "*honoring God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him*"
- Religious hypocrisy; cleaning up the outside while inside is filthy
- Moralism; focusing on behavior but not the heart – we are all guilty

- Jesus condemns all human efforts to please God because they are external & temporary at best – same lesson as feeding multitudes & walking on water = we can't do it; we can't change our hearts

What's inside us is so bad & it can't be fixed by anything we do, like washing hands or taking seminar or reading a book or going to church

- The only thing that matters is a radical change of heart
- That's *Power of Jesus*; what Jesus does through Gospel; transforms us on inside (head/heart) so what we do on outside (hands) changes
- God does it - gives us a new heart; puts His Spirit inside us
- What's our part? Focus on Jesus, abide in Jesus, cry out to Jesus, admit we can't & ask Jesus to do what we are unable to do

Matthew drives lesson home in rest of Chapter 15: *Jesus demonstrates His power* by healing Canaanite woman's demon-possessed daughter & the various diseases of the people

- In these miracles, Jesus is not only raising disciples view of Him, but also picturing Gospel by demonstrating He is Messiah sent not only to Jews but to Gentiles; One who came to heal disease of sin

Lessons from these Gentile encounters with Jesus:

- Canaanite woman recognized she was helpless to heal her daughter
- She came to the right place; cried out to Jesus for "mercy"
- She knew she didn't deserve anything from Jesus & that she had nothing to offer Jesus, but she didn't easily give up
- Verse 25: "Lord, help me" is basic prayer of Christian heart every day; "God, I can't do this (cook another meal; change another diaper; spend another day alone); please help me"

Verses 29-31: Crowds of Gentiles came to Jesus for healing & He healed them all – why did Jesus do that?

- Verse 31: "And they glorified the God of Israel" – through miracles, God's love & compassion & power was put on display
- Jesus went to Gentiles, unlikely people hated by Jews, to put the *Power of God* on display so God would get all the glory

## **CLOSING**

When reading account of Jesus walking on the water & calming the storm, we're often quick to ask: "What are the storms in your lives?"

- "Whatever your storms, Jesus can calm the storms in your life"

That's true, but that's not the point of the story; not point of the Bible

- Bible is not a self-help book; not about us; it's about Jesus
- “*The Bible was not given to us to stare at ourselves, but that we might stare at God*” – to astonish us with Who God is & what He's done for us through Jesus

We study Bible to get to know Jesus; develop a relationship with Jesus; know Gospel & have our view of Who Jesus is & what He did raised so that we are prepared for every day, ordinary *life* & for *suffering* that is inevitable, & for *death* – ours & death of those we love

- Bible shows us that we can't be or do what God created us to be & do, so we're forced to run to Jesus & keep our eyes on Jesus
- As we continue through *Matthew*, don't lose your sense of awe & wonder as we see Jesus Who is *Provision, Protection, & Power*

## **PRAYER**