

Sunday School Lesson for March 1, 2026
Matthew 14

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this first Sunday of March, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Jeff's message from Matthew, chapter thirteen, about our Lord's parables about seeds, a sower, a mustard seed, hidden treasure, and a precious pearl, ending with yet another disappointing story about how He was rejected in His own hometown, our lesson today comes from chapter fourteen where we learn of the death of John the Baptist, the feeding of five thousand, and Jesus' walking on the water in another storm and Peter's desire to follow Him.

We learned back in chapter four that John the Baptist had been arrested by Herod Antipas, or Herod the tetrarch, the son of Herod the Great--that king who had been visited by the wise men and had subsequently ordered that all children under the age of two in Bethlehem be killed. Antipas had been brought up in Rome with his brother Archelaus. At his father's death, Herod Antipas was given the rule over Galilee and Perea **as shown on this map**. The title "tetrarch" originally identified someone who ruled over a fourth part of any country, but it came to be used as the title of any governor or ruler of a province subject to the Roman emperor.

Matthew tells us in the first verse of chapter fourteen that "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, and he said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead.'" How Herod could have missed hearing about Jesus by this time, we don't know. It seems that, either Matthew is speaking about a more general time period than that exact moment, as if to say, "Around this time," or the disciples' first preaching

tour has caused such a stir in Galilee that Herod decided he finally needed to do something about it--or both.

Either way, he said to his servants--verse two--: “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” Others in the court--so Mark tells us--thought Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets of old. We know that Herod feared John, and it’s likely that his conscience was burdened by what he had done to him. Herod now assumed that John had come back from the dead.

John was dead because--verse three--, “Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’ And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, ‘Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.’ And the king was sorry, but, because of his oaths and his guests, he commanded it to be given. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.”

Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod the Great. She was first married to Herod Philip, by whom she had a daughter, Salome, probably the one that danced at Herod’s birthday party. The first century, Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that this marriage of Herod Antipas with Herodias took place while he was on a journey to Rome. He stopped in at his half-brother Philip’s house; fell in love with Philip’s wife; agreed to put away his own wife, the daughter of Aretas, King of Petraea in Arabia; and Herodias agreed to leave Philip and live with him. Unmarried and closely related, they were living in

an incestuous and adulterous relationship, and John, faithful to the Word of God although at the risk of his life, had publicly shamed them.

Herodias took it so personally that she crafted a plan to have John the Baptist executed. She had her daughter, Salome, dance before Herod at his birthday party. For an unmarried daughter, particularly the step-daughter of the governor, to dance before a crowd of men was a violation of all rules of modesty and propriety, and it would have been especially abhorrent to the Jewish mind. One commentator would have us recall that “One great principle of all eastern nations is to keep their females from public view. ... If they appear in public, it is always with a veil, so closely drawn that their faces cannot be seen. No modest woman would have appeared in this manner before the court, It is also probable that the dance was one well known in Greece--the lascivious and wanton dance of the Ionics.” Another adds, “The dancing of a mere girl would have been no entertainment to the sensual revellers. The treat lay in the indecency.”

The dance over, and Herod, most likely filled with wine from his wife’s pitcher and aroused by his baser instincts, then offers Salome whatever she might ask, “up to half of my kingdom,” Mark adds. Instructed by her mother as to what she should ask for, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” Most translations retain the important word order in the Greek: “Give me here”--signifying, not only the location, but the sense of “here and now.” If Herod had time to think about it, he might change his mind. One commentator suggests, “If not done at once under the influence of wine and the momentary gratification given by the voluptuous dance, it might never be done at all.” “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.”

Herod feared John. Mark tells us in chapter six, verse nineteen, that “Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy

man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.”

But now, in a moment of cowardice, Herod chose to keep his promise to Herodias’ daughter and avoid public ridicule as well as his wife’s wrath-- “because of his oaths and his guests”--, rather than choose to obey the greater obligation not to murder. So, John was executed and his head brought to Salome on a platter which she promptly presented to her mother. “And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.”

One commentator suggests that, “There is / in this / some proof of forbearance, if not of kindness, on Herod’s part. He did not persecute John’s disciples, or prevent them [from] paying the last [respects] to their master.”

The head of John the Baptist, by the way, is claimed to be located in four different locations today--the Cathedral of Amiens in France; the basilica of San Silvestro in Capite, in Rome; the Residenz Museum in Munich, Germany; and the great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus where Muslims believe Jesus will return at the End of Days.

John had faithfully fulfilled his task. He had come to be “A voice of one calling: ‘Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert.’” “Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan” had gone out to him, so Matthew told us in chapter three, verse five. When Jesus came to be baptized by him, John declared to all those present, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”--John, chapter one, verse 29.

John understood his subordinate role, telling those who had come to hear him--a crowd that also included scribes and Pharisees--“He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire”--Matthew, chapter three,

verse eleven. John's testimony was crucial in establishing Jesus' identity and His mission. At his death, the way was fully prepared, the highway was made perfectly straight, and the Kingdom of God was at hand.

None of the gospel writers tell us how the Lord received the news or what happened to John's disciples after this. Matthew tells us in verse thirteen, "Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself," likely to mourn the death of His cousin, but perhaps, as some scholars suggest, to escape from Herod. **Luke tells us the place where He went was near Bethsaida, and you can find its location on this map, not very far from Capernaum where He probably was when He received the news.**

Unfortunately, He rarely had time to Himself, for Matthew then tells us, "But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns." Perhaps roused by the death of John the Baptist--after all--verse five--they held him to be a prophet--the people now set out along the shore, following Jesus as He made His way by boat.

As He gazed upon the crowds, we can only imagine the emotions that flooded His soul as Matthew tells us in verse fourteen: "When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick." Just as in the closing verses of chapter nine, He saw the crowds who came, desperate to hear His words along with the blind, the lame, the sick, and the demon-possessed, as He personally bore their griefs and carried their sorrows.

Burdened with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking down under the weight of their sin and the added load of their traditions that did nothing to ease their guilt; neglected by those who ought to have been their enlightened teachers; longing for the Messiah to come to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, He saw them all, and, rather than

attend to what we would have thought would have been His own grief, “he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”

All through the day, He healed, He restored, He comforted, and yet they still came, and they stayed to hear more. In verse fifteen, Matthew tells us, “Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’” In Jewish reckoning, there were two “evenings;” the first beginning at three in the afternoon, and the second around six. Most translations read, “The time is already passed” or “the hour is already late” which are more accurate renderings than the English Standard Version’s, “the day is now over.” “The time is now past” refers, not to the time of day itself but the usual time of the evening meal which was around five o’clock. So, it’s late, they’re in the wilderness and a long way from any place to eat or buy food, and no one had invented food trucks yet.

So, instead of sending the people away as the disciples recommended, Jesus told them--verse sixteen--: “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”

Not only did Jesus lead them in paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake, leading them beside still waters and restoring their souls as He shepherded them through His teachings, He also prepared a table before them. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with two fish and five loaves of bread is the only one that’s recorded by all four gospel writers; and, although each writer includes some details unique to him, the stories are nearly identical. John tells us it was close to the time of the Feast of Passover--the middle of spring in Galilee--, and Mark tells us that the grass was green where they were gathered. All four mention some kind of baskets, tell us that Jesus “blessed” the food or gave thanks, and three of them note that He looked up to heaven as He did so.

Jesus had long been aware of this dilemma and, as the day progressed, it's quite possible that the disciples started thinking about dinner as well. As the day wore on, Jesus was probably waiting for His disciples to say something about it. They recognized that there wasn't any way / any of them could provide enough food for the thousands of people who were there. As a result, their only solution to the problem was to send the people away--to the few houses nearby or back to Capernaum or Chorazin--each about four miles away--, or across the river to Bethsaida. Maybe there / they could find enough to eat. It was for sure the disciples didn't have enough for all of them.

But weren't these the same Twelve who had walked with Jesus and seen Him heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead? Did they not have even a vague sense that Jesus could provide food for them and all the others? It seems pretty clear they were clueless.

The strange suggestion that the disciples should feed the crowd themselves surely seemed absurd, but Jesus, / John tells us, already knew what He was going to do, and this is the first lesson from this miracle: when our resources seem inadequate to accomplish what God has called us to do, the Lord invites us to trust Him to do what we can't understand or imagine.

Alexander MacLaren writes, "Commands are given and apparent duties laid on us, in order that we may find out how **impotent** we are to do them. It can never be our duty to do what we cannot do, but it is often our duty to attempt tasks to which we are conspicuously inadequate, in the confidence that / He who gives them / has laid them on us to drive us to Himself, and there to find sufficiency [in Him]. The best preparation of His servants for their work in the world is the discovery that their own [resources] are [limited, and our trust in them rather than in God's provision can be a serious stumbling block]." Our extremity is often the occasion for God's opportunity.

Taken aback by His instructions, Mark tells us that the disciples said, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give

them something to eat?” Two hundred denarii was about eight months’ salary for an average laborer. The number could have come from the amount that they had with them on hand in their coffers that came from donations--funds that were probably intended to feed the poor, but that wasn’t near enough to pay for food for all the people. Since it appeared that there was no way in the world they could buy enough food for all the people, the only solution they knew of / was to send them all away.

In Mark’s account, Jesus sent them out to find what they could. After searching, Matthew tells us in verses seventeen, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” John tells us that the loaves were only barley loaves--the only bread the poor could afford and that people used / to feed their animals--and that the fish were small. Such a meager supply wouldn’t even give everybody a taste, let alone fill their stomachs--or so they thought. Yet Jesus said, “Bring them here to me.”

With the stage set for the miracle to follow, Jesus had everyone sit down. Matthew then describes the miracle with beautiful simplicity--verse nineteen: “taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”

Taking the paltry provisions in His hands seems to have been a part of the “blessing” a typical custom practiced among the Jews before the beginning of a meal. What He actually said, none of the gospel writers, oddly enough, tells us. It’s possible that He commanded a blessing on the loaves and fishes so that they might increase and multiply / and gave thanks to the Father for what the people would come to understand about Him and His Kingdom as a result of what was about to happen--but, again, we don’t know.

And we're also not told when exactly the miracle occurred. All Mark tells us is that Jesus kept giving the food to the disciples who passed it out to those present. In blessing and breaking the food, those actions happened as single acts, but "He kept giving" the pieces to His disciples. The pieces must have multiplied in His hands, for the disciples always found His hands full when they returned for more. The more they handed out, the more He had for them. Who knows how long this went on.

What we do know is that--verse twenty: "They all ate and were satisfied." Don't miss the importance of this brief note. It would have been rare in that day for someone / other than the few members of the upper class of society / to eat a meal so abundant that they went away satisfied. The word we have translated "satisfied" was used to refer to the fattening of animals as they gorged themselves on hay and grass.

Those who were fed at the Lord's banquet table that evening went away with full stomachs--many of them for perhaps the first time in their lives. But, even though they all "were satisfied" by what they ate, Matthew tells us in the end of verse twenty that "they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over." There were leftovers! And each apostle had a basketful to remind him of the Lord's lavish abundance at a time when they thought His command to give the people something to eat was impossible.

As if that weren't enough to show the wonder-working power of this One Whom Matthew is showing his readers to be the Messiah, he adds in verse 21, concluding his remarks about this miracle, "And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children." The word translated "men" here is not the more generic word that's often translated as "mankind," but the word that specifically means "adult males." The total number of people was far greater than five thousand.

The significance of the miracle wasn't lost on the people who watched in amazement as two fish and five loaves of bread became a feast for more than

five thousand people. The Jews of that day generally believed that, when the Messiah came, He would outdo Moses, the great, national hero of Israel. There was a Rabbinical saying that “The former redeemer”--Moses--” caused manna to descend for them; in like manner shall our latter redeemer cause manna to come down, as it is written, ‘There shall be a handful of corn in the earth’ (Psalm 72:16).” Although Matthew doesn’t provide us with this backstory to the miracle of feeding the five thousand, he points us once again to Who Jesus is by telling us what He does.

John tells us that, after this miracle when the people asked for a sign that Jesus had been sent from God--a sign that would fit their theology about the Messiah--, He corrected their misunderstanding by telling them in chapter six, verse 32: “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.” In other words, “Moses didn’t give you the manna, God did. And the manna that your forefathers received in the wilderness isn’t the bread that has the power and the permanence to give you eternal life. Besides that, the bread that God gave your forefathers stopped when they entered the Promised Land, but God--My Father--, keeps on giving the true bread out of heaven.”

Jesus wanted to clarify for them the source and provision of the bread that He wants them to receive--verse 33: “For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” Without this bread you and I and everyone else are spiritually dead, and this is the point Jesus is trying to make: we know that it’s the Father who gives the truly heavenly Bread, for it is His Bread that takes us who were spiritually dead and makes us alive through faith. So, He tells them plainly in verse 35: “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.”

But Matthew doesn’t tell us any of this. After all, he focuses on what Jesus does, and Jesus has just fed more than five thousand people with a kid’s meal. With that, Matthew tells us in verse 22 that Jesus sent His disciples

across the Sea of Galilee once again, while He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray.

As the light fades and the curtain falls on this wondrous scene on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, we're left to wonder how the young boy who provided the loaves and fishes / that Mark tells us about / thought about what he had done as his meal was used to feed five thousand men and their families. We could well imagine that he watched with widening eyes as the food kept coming and the people kept eating until they could eat no more, and that he had played a part in this wondrous miracle. Don't you know, he had a story to tell when he got home!

So, Jesus has sent the people home with full stomachs and glad hearts. He's gone up onto the mountain to pray, and the disciples are making their way across the Sea of Galilee once again.

As you read through the gospels, you'll find the Lord quite often going up to a mountain to pray where He could be alone and pour out his soul to His Father for Himself and for others. He surely still bore grief over John's death, but, even more than that, the knowledge that John's work was done, and the way had been prepared for Him to complete His work--work that would be completed only on Calvary's cross and at the empty tomb. And yet the people still didn't understand what the Messiah would do. John tells us in chapter six, verse fifteen, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself."

He also knew that, when He arrived at His next destination, the people would expect Him to give them food again, as John tells us in chapter six of his gospel. He would tell them, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," but they wouldn't believe Him, asking themselves, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, "I have come down from heaven?"'" Then He would tell them plainly in verse 53, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink

his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” “After this,” verse 66, “many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.” The way was clear, but it would not be easy, so, “he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.”

Oddly enough, His going up to a mountain to pray was quite contrary to the traditions of the Jews who prohibited praying in places with even a little elevation. They chose the first verse of Psalm 130 as their proof text: “Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;” and the tradition held that a person was not to stand upon a throne, a footstool, or in any high place and pray, “because there are no high places before God.” But it was in this isolated, elevated place that our Lord Jesus communed with the Father in prayer.

As the night drew on, the winds began to pick up on the Sea of Galilee--not unusual as we learned in chapter eight. It’s not easy going for the disciples--not nearly as bad as the last voyage Matthew tells us about, but they’re struggling to get anywhere--verse 24: “The boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.” John tells us in his gospel that they had gone about three or four miles, so, wet and weary, they’re about a third of the way across, struggling with the oars, bailing out the water that kept splashing into the boat.

There was a full moon that night--John tells us that the Passover was “at hand” just before feeding of the five thousand. As the light shone over the rolling waves, the disciples noticed something in the distance, coming towards them--verse 25--“In the fourth watch of the night [Jesus] came to them, walking on the sea.” The fourth watch would have been between three and six in the morning, they’ve been rowing now for perhaps nine hours, and they’ve only made it three or four miles, the wind’s blowing and the waves are crashing against the boat, and--verse 26--, “When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, ‘It is a ghost!’ and they cried out in fear.”

“But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’” The moment they cried out, He responded, calming their fears, identifying Himself, and restoring their confidence. “Take heart”: be of good courage, don’t be alarmed by at my appearance. “It is I”--your Friend, Your Master, your Savior, Your Redeemer, Your Lord. “Do not be afraid”--don’t be afraid of Me, or the winds, or the waves, or the dark of night. This would not be the last time He would unexpectedly appear in their midst and have to tell them, “Don’t be afraid.”

“Immediately Jesus spoke to them.” Mark tells us that while Jesus “was alone on the land ... he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.” But not until the last watch of the night does He come, when they have struggled for hours, the boat is out in the middle of the lake, and the wind is “against them.”

Alexander MacLaren writes, “We may learn from this the delays of His love. Because He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus, He stayed still, in strange inaction, for two days, after their message [that His friend, Lazarus, was sick]. ... Heaven’s clock goes at a different rate from our little timepieces. God’s day is a thousand years, and the longest tarrying is but ‘a little while.’ When He has come, we find that it is ‘right early,’ though, before He came, He seemed to us to delay. He comes across the waves. Their restless and yielding crests are smoothed and made solid by the touch of His foot. ‘He walketh on the sea as on a pavement,’ [we find in Job 9:8]. It is a revelation of divine power. It is one of the very few miracles affecting Christ’s own person, and may perhaps be regarded as being, like the Transfiguration, a casual gleam of latent glory breaking through the body of His humiliation, and so, in some sense, prophetic. ... In another aspect, we have here the symbol of Christ’s using our difficulties and trials as the means of His loving approach to us. He comes, giving a deeper and more blessed sense of His presence by means of our sorrows, than in calm sunny weather.” “Only when the Lord of Hosts is with us, ought we not to fear, ‘though the waters roar . . . and be troubled.’

‘Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves’ can we / feeble creatures / face **all** terrors, and feel **no** terror.”

At this point, Peter answered him, “‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ [And Jesus] said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.” Students of the Bible go back and forth as to what led Peter to make this request--was it prideful self-confidence or faith? It seems that both played a part in Peter’s stepping out of the boat and walking to Jesus on the water. But the testing process triggered one and clarified the other. At first, the self-confidence is set aside as his eyes are fixed on the Lord. “Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.” With the Lord at his side and his eyes fixed on Him, he’s safe.

But then his gaze shifted. He took his eyes off Jesus. He had walked on the water, “But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”

Jesus doesn’t wait for him to admit that he shouldn’t have looked at the wind or think about how unnatural it was for him to be walking on water; He responds immediately. And notice that Jesus never rebukes Peter for making the request. It seems quite clear that his venture of faith would have continued without incident and he would have returned to the boat safe and sound had he kept his eyes on Jesus and his faith not faltered. All Jesus asked is, “Why did you doubt?”

Verse fourteen: “And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.” From the fury and intensity of the wind that had whipped the waves and withered Peter’s faith in the Lord’s provision, there was now a perfect calm. As Lord of the winds and the waves, both obey Him; yet one more demonstration of His power over His creation, just as His walking on the water had been.

MacLaren shares these words by way of application to our lives today: “It is not always true that His presence is the end of dangers and difficulties, but the consciousness of His presence does hush the storm. The worst of trouble is gone when we know that He shares it; and though the long swell after the gale may last, it no longer threatens. Nor is it always true that His coming, and our consciousness that He has come, bring a speedy close to toils. We have to labour on, but in how different a mood these men would bend to their oars after they had **Him** on board! With Him beside us, toil is sweet, burdens are lighter, and the road is shortened. Even with Him on board, life [may be] a stormy voyage; but without Him, it ends in shipwreck. With Him, it may be long, but it will look all the shorter while it lasts, and, when we land, the rough weather will be remembered but as a transient squall. These wearied rowers, who had toiled all night, stepped on shore as the morning broke on the [quiet shore]. So we, / if we have had Him for our [Captain], shall land on the eternal shore, and dry our wet garments in the sunshine, and all the stormy years that seemed so long shall be remembered but as a watch in the night.”

With Jesus and Peter safely aboard, “Those in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’” Seeing Him walk on the water, causing Peter to do the same after his request, saving him when he looked away from Jesus to the wind, and stilling the wind and waves led them to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. They had heard a voice from heaven declare this at His baptism, they had heard it from the demons who possessed the men at Gadara. If they had not believed it before, this latest series of events confirmed it for them.

The last event that Matthew tells us about is found in the last three verses of chapter fourteen: “And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.”

The region of Gennesaret is on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee [as you can see on this map](#). It's a fertile plain about three miles long and a mile wide, bordered by the hills of Galilee to the west and the lake to the east. The area is well-known for its rich soil and abundant water supply, making it one of the most productive agricultural regions in ancient Israel and today as well.

When the people learned that Jesus was there, they brought to Him their friends and relatives who had any kind of illness, and He healed them. Mark elaborates in chapter six, verse 56 by saying, "And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment," as if all He had to do was walk through a crowd and people were healed. So convinced were they in His power to heal, that they, like the woman with the issue of blood who just wanted to touch the fringe of His garment, believed with unbounded confidence that all they had to do was touch the hem of His robe and they would be healed. And they weren't disappointed. Matthew tells us that "as many as touched it were made well," and the prefix that Matthew placed at the beginning of the Greek word for "made well" emphasizes that they experienced a complete cure--they were made completely whole.

The death of John the Baptist and his faithfulness to the end, Jesus' feeding five thousand with five loaves of bread and a couple of fish, walking on water and allowing Peter to do the same, and healing all who came to Him--all reveal to us God's faithfulness and provision as we place our faith in Him.

Thank you for being a part of our oh-so-brief glimpse into the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as seen through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this. Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter fifteen, we'll turn to chapter sixteen of Matthew's gospel to hear the Lord's response to another request from the Pharisees and the Sadducees for a sign, His warning to the disciples

about the leaven of these two groups, His question about who the people were saying the Son of Man is and Peter's answer, closing with the Lord's first declaration of His death in Jerusalem.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

The resources for this lesson include Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes (1834), text courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive; The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; The Expositor's Bible, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; The Expositor's Greek Testament - Nicoll, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com; Exposition of the Entire Bible by John Gill (1746-63), text courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive; ICC New Testament commentary on selected books, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com; Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical (John Peter Lange) text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; and The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 by BibleSoft, inc.