

Matthew 21-02-25a

Welcome to the Thursday night study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're in the Gospel of Matthew. We're in chapter 14.

We are all going to need our respective glasses to see the text. Although at this point, I can probably give it to you from memory, but we're going to be moving around a bit. So if I stray from Matthew 14 and John 6, and Revelation chapter two, I'll need my cheaters.

Thank you, my dear. But it's a fascinating study. And the theme tonight, if you want a big thick rope to hang onto in the storm, the theme is it's all about the bread.

It's all about the bread. If you understand the bread, these three sections of scripture fall together and compliment each other like stereo vision plus five one sound. It just clarifies so much.

And I've learned things I never knew before, seen things I never saw before. And it's just such a great revelation from the Lord Jesus himself, centering on this topic. And so we're going to continue to look at it tonight.

We've been looking at it over the last few nights and mornings, and we'll be picking up here in Matthew 14, and then we'll be transferring our flag to John chapter six, and ultimately climbing in the rocket ship and heading for Revelation chapter two. So you can, if you like to have your places marked so that you don't riffle the pages on the way, you can be sticking your bookmarks in those three passages. We're going to look at all of them tonight.

Matthew 14, John six, Revelation chapter two. As we begin our investigation of the word, and let me just, I may have said this before and maybe not, but with all due respect to people who are doing their church online and Zoom and whatnot, and even people that meet in person and you see them on the platform, and it has become fashionable or normal to just dress in your street clothes to present the word of God. And you may have noticed that I almost always at a minimum wear a shirt and tie, and on Sundays I have my jacket on as well.

And I'm not trying to make a fashion statement. I am trying to make a statement about, it's my way of showing respect for the word of God and the process of presenting it. I keep thinking if I would dress up for a wedding or a funeral or an interview, why would I not dress up when I am going to take things from the word of God and do my best to present them in a manner that honors the Lord and that helps all of us to live in a way that pleases him and glorifies him.

So if you wonder why I don't just show up in a wonderful Marine Corps sweatshirt and a ball cap, that's why. And that's probably the last time I'll ever say that, but if anybody

wonders, that's why. I'm not just stuck in the fashion past.

It's just my way of visually expressing the love and respect that I think we all have for God and his word and the savior that is revealed therein. And if I'm not gonna dress up for him, what am I gonna dress up for? Maybe my own funeral will be the last one, but that's gonna be my blues. And I'm gonna do like my dad and get planted in my Marine Corps uniform like God intended.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful and it is an honor and it is humbling to have direct access to your word through the ministry and power of your spirit, gifts that are given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ and by you as a result of his completed work on the cross to deliver us from the slavery of sin, to enter us into your family and into the body of Christ and all of the new covenant blessings that we have in this age. We're so grateful for these things.

We're grateful for the illumination that we have in this latter time to have the full orb'd revelation of the written word before us and to have the opportunity to learn it and see its pertinence and applicability in our own lives. We pray that as we look at these passages together tonight, that your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, transcend the limitations of the presentation and minister your truth to each of our hearts in a way that is meaningful and effective, that stimulates our hope and supports our faith and energizes our love for you and for one another. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's jump right in. If you're at Matthew chapter 14, you remember that Jesus fed the 5,000. Then the people thought that this free bread was a great idea and so they want to make the golden goose, the king and by popular acclaim.

And Jesus removes his disciples from this potentially hazardous situation. If people want to take the Lord by force and you've got 12 disciples and people are creative in ways that they can perpetrate their own will. And we've seen this over the past year in all kinds of manifestations in the public arena.

People will take public figures and do things that are public to them, statues of public figures, buildings that represent structures of government. There's all kinds of ways that when people believe that they are right and that the end justifies the means, then the means can take many forms. Jesus perceives because he has used his disciples to distribute this bread.

And so they are closely associated with this miracle. And there are people who think, well, we need this whole team. And rather than put his disciples in a position where they would be targets, Jesus sends them to the boat and gets them offshore and away from the crowd before he addresses the crowd.

And we know this from the details that we'll see in John chapter six. But looking at our primary passage in Matthew 14, after they eat in verse 20 and are filled and the disciples take up 12 baskets full of the fragments. What's our theme for tonight? Six words.

It is all about the bread. These fragments are fragments of bread. There are 12 baskets full.

12 is the number of the complete nation of Israel. And the indication here is that Jesus has provided the right amount of food for the crowd in divine revelation, knowledge that God has given his son, that this is the proper amount to nourish and properly feed the crowd. And the fact that they don't eat it all is a symbolic reflection of their lack of appetite for God's bread.

It is a, I say it again, you can write it down. The baskets of fragments are a symbolic reflection of lack of appetite for divinely provided bread. Makes sense, right? Jesus didn't make too much just so he could show that he could make too much.

He made the right amount and the crowd did not absorb it, didn't want it, wasn't hungry for it. A little bit sated them. So in Matthew it says, immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he sent the multitudes away.

This is such a wonderful insight into the way scripture records episodes and records historical happenings in biblical days. This account from Matthew is absolutely inspired. It is absolutely correct.

And yet it leaves out a lot. You look at verse 22, Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

When evening came, he was alone there. Then beginning in verse 24, you have the episode of the disciples struggling for eight or nine hours trying to get across the lake. Jesus walking on the water, Peter walking on the water, Peter sinking into the water and so on.

Well, it's so instructive and it should be a caution to all of us. Be careful about drawing conclusions from narrative scripture in a hasty fashion because many times scripture summarizes. You look at the genealogies.

I can demonstrate given enough time and some good stiff cups of coffee for you so that you don't fall asleep. I could demonstrate that the genealogies are not complete. You look at the genealogy in one place and it is skipping generations.

You go to another, for example, the genealogies of the Lord Jesus and then go back to Chronicles. And there are names when it says from Abraham, there's 14 generations and on down. There's not 14 generations.

It has been artificially assembled into 14 generations for memorization purposes and symbolic purposes. But you can go back to Chronicles and see that there are people that have been intentionally left out. And it's not just a numeric reason.

If you are a ne'er-do-well, God will slide you out of the narrative. And the people that are left out were not wonderful, strong, vibrant, interested, loving God and loving one another believers. They were spiritual slackers and their name is not in scripture.

The ones that are included are the backbone of that family line. These are the ones that ensured their heritage was carried forward. And it's intentional that the ne'er-do-wells are left out.

So there is a theological reason. There's a divine purpose in organizing these narratives. In the same way, there's a divine purpose in including Rahab and including Ruth and including Bathsheba in an indirect fashion by her who was the wife of Uriah, remember that? And there is a reason every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, every word in scripture is inspired and profitable, not just there as filler.

So you see this short three or four verse account here, turn now to John. I could just belabor this endlessly and go to Luke and Mark, but John six will serve our purpose. Start at verse 13 of chapter six, the disciples gathered up the fragments at Jesus' word.

Notice verse 12, this is a detail we don't have in Matthew. He said to his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost. I want an accurate, fulsome recovery of what was not eaten.

Therefore they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with fragments of the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. They notice assignment of responsibility. They were left over by those who had eaten.

They didn't eat all of what they were given. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. They figure he's another Moses.

Now, how do they view Moses? What is the value of Moses to the Jews, the Israelites of Jesus' day? Moses is the deliverer and Moses is the provider. They look and say, well, Moses led us out of Egypt. Moses caused the bread to come down from heaven.

Moses caused the water to come out of the rock. And so Moses is the George Washington of Israel, right? Jesus is going to correct that misapprehension and that wrong emphasis a little bit further down. We'll see it.

Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, odd that this is not in Matthew since Matthew presents Jesus as the coming king, right? That's the theme. We reviewed that on Sunday, the themes of each

of the four gospels. But why is it not given there? Because Matthew is also to a large extent in a form similar to the parables where it is presented to Israel without a lot of explanation, because if they loved the father like they should, if they had the love of the father in them, if they were looking for the salvation of Israel, God would give them understanding of the gospel of Matthew that is primarily to them.

And they wouldn't need elaboration. But as I said on Sunday, the answers are in the back of the book. And if you couldn't figure it out in Matthew, you can easily see it elaborated here in John.

So Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, which means they do not understand the bread. What's our theme? It is all about the bread. You've got to understand the bread.

They don't understand the bread. Just like when God said, take these commandments and bind them to your forehead and bind them to your hand. And when you rise up and when you come in, and so what did they do? They put a phylactery on their head and they put a phylactery on their hand and they nailed a mezuzah up on the doorpost.

No, you misunderstand the purpose of the command. It should be in your mind and in your heart when you think and when you act and when you leave your home and when you return to your home, when you are going out to mingle in the world and when you're inside with your family, you should remind yourself of the commandments. The physical binding of commandments is useless.

They don't open these phylacteries and unroll these little scrolls with these microscopic little copies of the 10 commandments and so on. It might be a reminder in the way that you wrap a rubber band around your finger. People used to, I don't know what they do now, probably put a thing in your phone.

But in old days, if people want to remember something, they'd tie a string around their finger and you say, what's that string for? Oh yes, I'm supposed to stop at the store on the way home. Well, it might have served that purpose but it misunderstands God's command. It makes mundane and physical what God intended to be heavenly and spiritual.

So they do the same thing with the bread. They want to take him by force and make him king. He departed again to the mountain by himself alone.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark and Jesus had not come to them. We get more details about this a little bit further down.

Skip down to verse 22, because you know what happens after the disciples leave in the boat. Jesus, it gets dark. He's on the mountain, they're on the sea.

They row and row and row and row. And in the fourth watch, Jesus is going to come to them, right? But on the following day, verse 22 of John six, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea, this is the other side of the sea from where Jesus and the disciples have now arrived. The people saw the disciples leave in the boat.

They know that Jesus did not leave with them in the boat. So on the following day, the people standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there except one. In your New King James, scribble out the word that, and scribble out the phrase which his disciples had entered.

These are the people at the shore where the 5,000 were fed. They got sleepy after they ate their fill of the bread and they stayed on that side. They figured Jesus and the disciples are going to still be there the next morning.

And so they basically camp out or filter into nearby villages looking for inns or relatives or whatever. But they come back the next morning. So on the following day, the people standing on the other side of the sea, this is the other side from where Jesus and the disciples now are, the site of the feeding.

They see that there's no other boat there except one. I don't know what this other boat is, but there's one boat on the shore and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples. They were there the previous evening and they said, well, we saw the 12 disciples sail away and Jesus was not in the boat.

However, verse 23, other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples, they got into these boats that came from Tiberias and probably the one remaining boat. And they are now, remember a lot of them followed on foot.

Jesus had come to a deserted place to be alone and pray and give his disciples a rest. And the people followed around. So they only had a few hours of rest.

Well, because these boats have all come from Tiberias and there's the one boat, a lot of these people get into these boats and say, we're gonna go back to Capernaum. We know that's where the disciples went. Jesus must have gone there because he's not here.

Why is this elaborated? I asked myself the question, why do we have verse 22 and verse 23 and verse 24 in John? When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. What is up with the boats? Why all of this elaboration? Matthew just skips right over it. And Matthew was there.

John doesn't skip over it. John was also there. Why? John is giving us details.

What are these people's eyes on? What are they thinking about? What happened the

previous day? At the close of the day, Jesus fed them. There's a miraculous multiplication of the bread and the fish. They are so entrenched in the physical world.

They wanted to make him king last night. They wanna track him down and continue that project. It's all about the earth.

It's all about circumstances. It's all about how can we get to Jesus? Can we get in a boat? Do we need to walk back around the shore the long way? We need to find him. We need to find him now.

He's liable to leave. Maybe he'll take another boat trip and we don't know where he's gone. We've got to find him and find him quick.

They are invested in earthly things, aren't they? What is the location? Where is the physical proximity of the Lord? How can we get there? How quickly can we get there? Who's got a boat? I don't wanna have to walk around the land. Here's some boats from Tiberius. Let's hire these, crowd into these, sail back across.

And this is a lot of people. Remember, there were 5,000 men plus hangers on. And I'm sure not all of them were able to get into boats, but the ringleaders and the ones who are pushing this idea to make Jesus the earthly king, mount an insurrection, push out the existing government.

So John is helping us understand the mindset of these people. They are invested in circumstances. Point of application, if you get invested in circumstances, even when you find the Lord, you're gonna miss him.

Even when you're looking at him, even when you're being fed by him. These people were fed by the Lord Jesus and his disciples and utterly and completely missed the point. What a scary thing for you and for me to be fed with bread from God's word and miss the point, miss the pertinence and the application in our lives, have the bread, but not fully consume it, not internalize it, not recognize the spiritual truth, the spiritual value, the spiritual application.

That's why we've got all of this physical circumstance narrative in John. He's saying, look at these people. Why do they not sit down and reflect on what happened yesterday? What does this really mean? This man is from God.

This man fulfills Old Testament scriptures related to the coming one, who he spent the whole day healing our diseases. He's not the coming King at this point. He's the suffering servant, right? Taking on disease and affliction is in the suffering servant passage.

If these people had sat still, sat down, had some conversation, speaking the truth to one another in love and said, this whole thing about making him King, that's not right. He's not coming as King. Those of you who went down and saw John at the Jordan, what did

John say? Behold the Lamb of God.

Behold the Lamb of God. Flip back a page in John chapter six to verse four and circle it. When Jesus went over the sea of Tiberias and the great multitude followed him, Jesus went up on the mountain and sat with his disciples.

Why do we have this detail in verse four? The Passover, a feast of the Jews was near. What are the two main elements of the Passover meal? It's the lamb, it's the bread. It's the lamb and unleavened bread, right? In the original Passover, you had the blood on the doorposts and so on, but the Passover meal that is celebrated annually on that feast is what you eat.

What do you think about while you're observing that commanded feast? Are you thinking about the hiding the matzah in a little thing and the perforations and all the stuff they go through? If you attend a Seder and a lot of Christians have tried to get into the Jewishness of the feast and attend at Seder and somebody will explain all of the additions and accretions that have gone into that, you don't have to know all of that. You don't have to go to a Seder and see what all the traditions have become over the centuries. All you gotta do is go back and read Exodus.

It's unleavened bread and it's lamb. John said, it's the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's a spiritual truth.

Jesus is going to talk more about the bread because in this case, it is all about the bread. But look, the Passover, a feast of the Jews was near. This, I think I mentioned on Sunday, how did Jesus know that of all the times he had crowds come and listen to him for a long time, that this was the time to feed them? The Passover was near and Jesus in his Holy Spirit guided humanity and his knowledge of his father's will, purpose and plan came to the conclusion that this is a great time to emphasize what the bread means.

He is the bread. He is the lamb. Two different aspects of his ministry, the bread speaking of his humanity and the testing that went on.

It's not grain like the grain offering or the bringing the kernels off of the wheat. It is ground. It is crushed.

It is mixed with oil representing the Holy Spirit. And then it is put in the fire and the ground grain that has become flour mixed with the oil of the Holy Spirit and baked in the fire becomes this bread. What is Jesus going to say in the upper room about the bread? This is my body.

Who are you? Who are you as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ right this moment? You are his body. Would you not expect to be ground, to have the oil of the Holy Spirit thoroughly mixed in and to be put into the fire to become bread? Not dough, not underdone. God's not gonna overcook us and like my grandmother trying to scrape the

black off and say, well, it's good in the middle.

It's a perfect plan. It is a perfect picture of what God does with us. We are his body.

We function as bread and we should expect to be ground fine and purified, sifted, mixed with the essential Holy Spirit, permeating us in every aspect and then baked in the fire. It transforms us into what God wants and we become the representation of Christ on earth. He in his incarnate earthly body has left.

Now we are here and we represent him. So the Passover, a feast of the Jews was near. There is no wasted note.

There is no wasted detail anywhere in scripture. It's all about the bread. Well, after the walking on the sea and on the following day, after these three or four verses of these people wandering around trying to figure out how to get next to Jesus and see if they can still get him to give them the bread in some fashion, he's put them out of the notion that he's gonna be king and so they're gonna say, well, give us this bread then.

You know, just open up a shop and we can just walk in and you'll just touch a loaf and it'll become 10 or 12. What is the nature of this truth that it's all about the bread? Jesus is going to explain it and explain it in detail beginning in verse 26. So, and very much in keeping with the character of the Lord Jesus that just makes you smile when you see it, they're gonna ask him one question and he's gonna answer a different question.

He doesn't answer the question they ask. It's just so, so gratifying to see the Lord Jesus keep his wits about him, keep focused on his purpose, on the will of the father, on the reason that he's here. And it's such a wonderful example for us to keep our focus and to remember why we are here to express the love of the father, the will of the father, obedience to the plan and purpose of the father, just as Jesus did, that's our mission as well.

So we're gonna pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna pick up here in verse 25, when they find him, what happens and what does he say about the bread? Now that we know that we have a personal connection to the bread, because we basically, in one sense, are the bread, it's gonna be extremely illuminating for us. So we'll see that when we come back from the break.