

Matthew 21-03-04a

This is Thursday evening, the 4th of March. I'm wearing navy blue tonight in honor of Dan and Lori's anniversary. Happy anniversary.

Hope you have celebrated in appropriate fashion. We're going to continue our study tonight in Matthew chapter, the end of chapter 14 and chapter 15. I came to understand that I had not given sufficient due to the last few verses in chapter 14.

So we're going to look at those right quick and then dive back into chapter 15. We can always fall back and regroup. It's a useful skill.

And there is a pregnant phrase there that is worth reviewing. So we're going to be picking up at Matthew 14, 34 tonight, and then moving forward. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study.

And believe me, it is a pertinent study. The things we are looking at in this section of God's word are amazingly full of traction and application for the time in which we live and the events that are happening almost even as I speak. So it's a good thing we're here.

God is in his heaven. The Holy Spirit is present with us to help us understand and interpret and apply. So let's go to the Lord in prayer and we'll get started.

Father, how grateful we are for the many provisions that you make for us, both physical and spiritual. We're most thankful for the Lord Jesus and his work on our behalf, his ongoing ministry of intercession and representation at your right hand. We pray that as we look together at the portion of your word that is before us tonight, that the Holy Spirit will minister it to each of our hearts, help us to see clearly how we should then live, what our motivations and thoughts and actions should be in the light of these truths, that we can be stabilized, that we can shine as lights in the midst of our generation, that others will see the good in our lives and glorify you.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. As I said, we're going to pick up here in the last few verses of chapter 14. And you remember everything that precedes the successful walking on water by the Lord Jesus and the semi-successful walking on the water by Peter, who is pulled back out of the water and told by the Lord Jesus, oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt? It is so important for us not only to have faith, but to have faith in the proper object.

You can believe the laws of physics, you can believe experience when you've spent your whole life on a sea that you were never able to stand on top of before, or you can believe in the power of God expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. And Peter's experience has been so helpful to believers down through the centuries to be reminded of that point.

And it's never been more applicable than it is now.

We can look at forces that are at work in our nation, in our culture, in our world, decisions that are being made by people that seem to be in power and seem to have the power to affect our lives, but greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Fixing our eyes on the author and finisher of our faith is essential or we will sink into the troubled sea. It's really just that simple.

When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. I think it would have been, according to the program of Sam, if I was producing this particular miracle, as soon as Peter got pulled out of the water, I would have made the wind cease and the water become calm so that it would be an easier walk to the boat because they are some strides away. But Jesus leads Peter across the choppy sea.

He pulls him out of the troubled sea and they walk together across the troubled sea. The wind does not cease until they are back in the boat. Isn't that great? The Lord Jesus will not only pull us out, but Peter again walks on the water to get back in the boat.

Jesus doesn't get in the boat, reach over the side, get the boat hook and pull him in. Peter walks out to the Lord, sinks because he takes his eyes off of him. The Lord Jesus pulls him back up onto the surface of the water and they walk together across the troubled water to the boat.

Once they are in the boat, the storm stops. This is what the Lord does for us. Even when we fail, when our faith, later on Jesus is gonna say, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail.

Even when it does fail, the Lord Jesus is there to, as I said earlier, to intercede on our behalf, to represent us at God's throne, to provide that example of constancy and the sufficiency of God's grace. We will be delivered from the storm at the right place and the right time that most reflects the glory of God in our lives. And it's not always an immediate cessation.

We may sink in the midst of it. And when we are pulled back up onto our faith feet, the storm may still not be over, but with the presence of the Lord Jesus, we are able to navigate what may have momentarily overwhelmed us. And it's a wonderful, wonderful lesson.

So those who were in the boat came and worshiped him saying, truly, you are the son of God. Now, this is not the first time that they've seen him manage a storm, is it? What new thing have they seen here that they didn't see last time? It's the water, it's walking on the water. But look at verse 34.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret, I think is a better translation here. It doesn't make a whole lot of difference, but they landed back at

Gennesaret, not just the vicinity or the region of Gennesaret, they landed at Gennesaret. When the men of that place recognized him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to him all who were sick and begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment.

And as many as touched it were made perfectly well. If you remember, this segment of the story began with a similar scene back in verse 13. Jesus went across the lake to get away from this kind of scenario, but when he was followed by these multitudes on foot from the cities in verse 14, he went out and saw the great multitude.

He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick. That's how the whole feeding of the 5,000 and storm on the water, we want to make you king. It's all about the bread, remember? And then teaching as doctrines, the traditions of men that we saw this past Sunday, the bread, what is it that you imbibe? What is it that you take in and digest? And it comes to define you.

It isn't what you take in that defiles you, it's what comes out. That's what proceeds from the heart defiles us. We saw that in John this past Sunday.

Well, now they've come back to where Jesus was before he went across the lake, before he fed the 5,000, before there was the attempt to make him king, before he condemned those who were throwing rocks at his disciples for not washing their hands and so on because of the way they ate. And well, the methodology, there are people who think, well, it's a good church if the messages are expository or if there's exegesis or if there's enough systematic theology in it, or if there's enough current application or enough humor, or if you're casual or if you're formal or if you're this or if you're that, and is it traditional? Do you wear a robe? Do you stand at a pulpit? Do you have a plexiglass pulpit? Do you have a screen? Do you have a sound system? Do you have a light show? Do you have a band? Do you have this? Do you have that? What is now today the tradition of the elders? If you're elderly enough, this wasn't the tradition when you were younger. Now it's the tradition of the elders because people have been putting on shows in church for decades now.

This really happened in the late 60s and came into its own in the 70s and 80s, and the megachurch phenomenon really began in the 1960s. No such thing as a megachurch. First Baptist Dallas was one of the first and was pioneering in that arena, and many others have followed since.

But now that is the tradition of the elders, and you don't have a church unless you have X, Y, and Z. But is this the measure, what you take in and how you take it in? Did you take in the food according to the tradition of the elders, which in this day was a ritual washing of hands. There was an elaborate cleansing before you would sit down to take in food, and people would say, well, you should be just as careful in taking in the law of God through Moses as you are in taking in your physical food and vice versa. But it became

an end in itself, and it didn't really matter that instead of taking in the law of God, you were taking in the tradition of the elders symbolized by this elaborate washing of hands.

And it was a triumph of ritual over reality, of appearance and form over substance. And Jesus condemned that. Well, the same thing pertains today, and not just in church.

It also pertains in whatever people now recognize as a standard of righteousness and as a standard of truth. And is it what has been established by those who guide society? Remember in Israel, society was guided by the Pharisees and the scribes and the elders and the chief priests, the Sanhedrin. Their whole society was defined by these religious leaders.

Today, we have separation of church and state. Not a bad thing, by the way. Church and state should be separate, but that separation does not imply elimination.

The state should not eliminate the church, and the church should not ignore the state. There is separateness. There is independence, but there should not be the squashing of one by the other.

The church should not spend its time attacking whoever's the current king, so to speak. Scripture says, fear God, honor the king. It doesn't say honor him if he's good or if he imbibes spiritual values.

Fear God, honor the king. The king has his authority and bears the sword because God gives him the authority. God decides who's in charge, and he's got his reasons.

I saw an interesting observation today by someone saying, you know, the revelation of a lot of the social forces that are currently at work and are busy trying to pass legislation and change policies and publish books and influence education. And it's very overt. It's very obvious.

It's very clear. It's plain as the nose on your face what these people are up to, what their objectives are, how they plan to achieve them, and so on. And this person said, you know, in a way, it may have been God's will that the previous president and his administration got taken out of office because we would have never seen this revealed so plainly.

The lid has been pulled off, and the can of worms is open for all to see. And we might have continued to assume that all is well because perhaps we agreed with the administration and its policies and actions and so on, and have been unaware of the deep-seated, well-funded, and well-founded efforts that are now exposed and out in the open. And I'm not necessarily saying I agree or disagree.

What I'm saying is this would be the kind of thing where if we step back and remember that God is in his heaven and things happen for a reason, this would be an example.

People say, why did God let this person get elected, or that person get defeated, or whatever? Well, there can be reasons that might not occur to us at first blush in the same way that things happen in our lives. We lose people.

We are separated from people. We have shifts in circumstance. Our job goes away.

Our income goes away. Our associations go away. We suddenly find ourselves in unfamiliar territory, on unfamiliar ground, and we say, Lord, why is this happening to me? Faith says God knows what he's doing.

And I commit myself to the hands of a faithful creator. And if I don't know the why, and I don't know the how, and I don't know the duration, I don't know the extent, I don't know the causes, conditions, successions, and relations, but like Paul, I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded he's able to keep what I've committed to him against that day.

You ever thought, you know, we've quoted that many times, the wonderful hymn that rehearses those words, but think about the middle part. I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. So an interesting question to ask ourselves is, how much have I committed to him? If I'm convinced that he's able to keep what I've committed to him against that day, well, if I only commit, you know, one talent out of five, then that's all that's going to be preserved unto the day.

This is an implied call to total commitment, right? If God is going to keep what we commit to him, with a view toward that final day and that future kingdom, how much do you want to commit? I was thinking about this because, you know, in earlier days when I was working for various entities, they would let me put something into a retirement fund because it was nonprofit. It's not a 401k, it's like a 403b. And for a little while, for a few years, I was working with an organization that if I put in some money, they would put in some also, which I'd worked for a lot longer.

But there's a little bit put aside. And so the question becomes, you have control over how this retirement entity invests those funds. And I think, well, you know, it's not very much, but do I want them to put it into this or that or the other? Do I want to make a safe investment? Do I want to, you know, put it at more risk? How much do I want to commit into the hands of nameless, faceless people who are supposedly have my best interests at heart, but if it all goes in the tank, there's nobody I can call and say, hey, Fred, why did you invest me in this Chinese stock and they've taken all the American money and now I'm, you know, I've got nothing.

I don't know who these people are. I'm told that they're good. I'm told that they, you know, it's a Christian based foundation, but I remember something my dad told me when I was very, very small and repeated to me several times in my upbringing.

And it's harsh, but he said, and I'll rephrase it from his vocabulary, but he basically said,

you haven't been taken to the cleaners until you've been taken to the cleaners by a fellow believer. Best of intentions, but just because it's a Christian organization, just because it claims the name of Christ doesn't mean they can't have the depths of rascality of the worst unbeliever you ever met. Being a Christian is no guarantee.

Being a Christian ministry, a Christian church, a Christian organization is no guarantee that it can't sink to the biggest depths that humanity can sink to. And it happens over and over. So back to my main point, what is it I am willing to commit? Well, it depends on who I'm committing it to.

There are people I know, and I'm talking to a lot of you. I would commit my family, my funds, my life, my possessions, anything I've got, because I know you and I trust you. When you know someone and you trust someone, you can commit to the nth degree.

We know God, we love God, and we trust God, and we should be all in, shove everything to the middle of the table and say, the Lord's got it. I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded that he's able to keep everything I've committed to him against that day.

In troublous times, in uncertain times, you cannot trust the bank. You cannot trust the government. You cannot trust whoever's managing your retirement or your investments.

You cannot trust that a company that's here today and looks rock solid is going to be here tomorrow. What can you trust? What can you fully commit to without hesitation, purpose of evasion, mental reservation? What can you commit to? You can commit to God, the Father, and his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit. You can go all in on the word of God, the spirit of God, God, the Father, God, the son.

There is no limit to the fullness of that commitment and we ought to be all in. And that's really about the only thing we should be all in for. We need to be wise as serpents, even as we are harmless as doves.

We should be cautiously optimistic in some cases. We should be reserved and slightly pessimistic in other cases when it comes to the things of the world. When it comes to God and the things of God, all in.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, right? So to what are we committed? And it's important that we understand the truth and not be hornswoggled by tradition, teaching as doctrines the traditions of men. Now, we're going to see in this little short section here, I'm glad I was encouraged to circle back and look at it because I thought about covering this and I thought, well, I just want to move on. But now having been encouraged, we are going to cover it.

And take a look. When the men of that place recognized him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to him all who were sick. And what was the request? Look at verse 36 really closely.

What's the most unique thing in verse 36? What sticks out? They begged him what? They begged him that he would teach. They begged him that he would explain the parables. They begged him that he would bring in the kingdom.

What did they beg him? Did they beg him that he would heal their sick? Did they just say, look, it's like I'm letting this guy down through the ceiling. Would you please heal my mother? Would you please heal my brother? Would you heal my father, heal my son, heal my child? What did they specifically beg him? Look at it. What is the specific request? They begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment.

Why this? Let me touch the hem of your robe. Why would they request this? Well, you remember flip back a few pages to Matthew chapter nine, verse 20, as he's on his way to the synagogue ruler's house, Jairus, suddenly a woman who had a flow of blood, this is Matthew 9, 20, write it in the margin next to the end of chapter 14, Matthew 9, 20 and 21. Woman who had a flow of blood for 12 years came from behind and touched the hem of his garment.

For she said to herself, if only I may touch his garment, I shall be made well. When Jesus turned around and saw her, he said, be of good cheer daughter, your faith has made you well. How many different ways does Jesus heal? We've seen many of them here in Matthew.

We're going to see more before the gospel concludes. He can heal with a touch. He can heal with a word.

Sometimes we're not told the specific mechanism. Sometimes he's going to spit on the ground and make a paste and rub mud on somebody's eyes. Sometimes he heals by command.

He can raise the dead with a touch. He does it with the little girl, Jairus' daughter. The, when the mother is weeping and they're carrying her son out on a stretcher to bury him, he walks up and touches the dead body and it comes to life.

Many, many different ways. Jesus is going to put his fingers in the ears of a deaf man and he's going to hear. Remember that? Many different ways.

Why is this? I'm going to tell you right now, I think this is a very tragic verse. I think verse 36 of chapter 14 is tragic. Why do I say that? Why do I suggest that? What do you think? Do you find it tragic? This is the incarnate son of God.

Have you ever had a question from the Bible? Have you ever wondered, what about babies who die before the age of accountability? What happens when my loved one passes away? What exactly is the timing of the rapture? What is the nature of the resuscitation for the Old Testament saints at the beginning of the world? What will I be doing during the millennial kingdom? Where will I be? Will I be living in a mansion? Will

we be in the Jerusalem that is going to come down out of heaven? Will we already be living there before it comes down out of heaven in Revelation chapter 22? And what exactly was going on in some of these Old Testament miracles and these Old Testament situations? And what did David mean when he said this in the Psalms? And what does it mean? How many different questions could you ask the incarnate son of God? What is their request? Can I touch your clothes? Why? Why? I heard that a woman who had a 12-year problem touched your clothes and she got well. It's a physical procedure. This is like a new tradition.

Touch the guy's clothes and you get well. When Jesus leaves, let's just get his clothes. We'll hang him in the synagogue.

Anybody that comes in and touches the clothes, it's a mechanism. I put the coin in the slot and a Coke comes out. I do this and a good thing happens.

People have had knock on wood, throw salt over your shoulder, needles and pins, needles and all of these superstitions. This is a superstitious approach to the Lord Jesus. He's in the same region.

You can go back and check. I did, I went back. Where was he when the woman with the issue of blood? Where was the synagogue that Jairus was the ruler of? It's in this region.

That's why it says when he returned, that's why it makes a difference. Did he land or what exactly happened? They landed at Gennesaret. Gennesaret, this is where the synagogue is.

This is where Jairus was. This is the woman with the issue of blood. So now that he's back, hey, just touch his clothes.

Don't have to talk to him. Don't have to worry about who he is, why he came, where he's been, feeding you the five. I don't care about that.

Just touch him. Just touch him. This is how quickly a tradition of the elders can get started.

It's a tradition now. And it's not a tradition of the elders. Remember what Jesus said over in John? Teaching as doctrine, a tradition of men, the traditions of men.

Traditions can spring up overnight. A standard of rightness and correctness and righteousness can spring up overnight. Look at what has happened in just the last few months in this country.

Are there new standards of what makes someone right and what makes someone wrong? If you say a certain thing or use a certain term or support a certain point of view or a certain person or a certain policy, are you suddenly, according to the mores and the

ethics of society, a bad guy that needs to be punished, that needs to lose their job, lose their home, lose as much as we can take away from you? Because we have concluded that according to the tradition of men, you are unrighteous. And instead of vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Oh no.

Vengeance belongs to society. Society will repay. Your peers will repay.

People that see or hear you on social media will repay. We are God. We know.

We have the standard of righteousness. We are sovereign. We are righteous.

We are just. We love those who deserve to be loved and we'll pick who that is. Think about the essence box of God, sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life.

Once you put something in the internet, it's eternal. It's forever. It's on the servers.

If somebody deletes the website, go to the Wayback Machine. You can find the page there. What is the problem today? Man has rebuilt the Tower of Babel and has put himself on top of it.

And he is God, omniscient. I will Google you. I will find out where you live.

I will dox you. I will publish your phone number and your email and your home address. And people will stand outside with bullhorns and harass your children and run them out of their school.

And we are God. We are the standard. We are judge, jury, and executioner.

God has no place in this scenario. And if you believe in God, if you believe in the standards of God, the righteousness of God, there's something wrong with you. And you need to be eliminated because you are a drag and you're a blotch and you're gonna affect our children.

You're going to mess up the forward progress of man by man's efforts, raising himself even higher on the tower. That's what is happening. Teaching as doctrines, as definitional truth, things that man has just made up out of whole cloth.

Man's standard of righteousness, teaching as doctrines, the traditions of men. If you want to know what's happening today, if you want to know the basis and the grounds and the landscape of the big lie, that is it. Man knows what is best.

Science knows what is best. They can't even agree on what science is. Everybody says follow the science.

Have you noticed all sides say follow the science and they don't agree? Why? Because science is made out of people. And get 10 scientists in a room, it's like getting 10

theologians in a room. Get 10 scientists in a room and you're gonna get 12 different opinions.

Science can't agree with itself. Commit your soul to the hands of a faithful creator, the absolute standard of righteousness with whom is no variance or shadow of turning. God's righteousness is the same like Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and forever.

Jesus said, I am the truth. And he is the same yesterday, today, and la'olam, eis aionios, unto the ages forever. The Lord Jesus will not change.

That is the only place to make a commitment. That is where we build is on the rock, not on the shifting sands that are blown about by the winds. And there's a dune here today and there's a valley here tomorrow.

So when you get here that they begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, now we have figured out. Today, this would be science. We have figured out that touching this particular individual's clothes produces healing.

So don't care who he is. Don't care why it works. Don't care what he has to say.

Don't care what his main goal is. Touch the clothes, get well. I'm begging you, just let me touch your clothes.

Lord says, well, you know, I've got something I'd like to say to you. No, no, no, please, just let me touch your clothes. Let my loved one touch your clothes.

All I want to do is just touch, don't talk to me. Don't want to know who you are, why you're here. Just want to touch the hem of your garment.

It's tragic. Let this not be us. That God becomes a formula.

That Bible class becomes a formula. That prayer becomes formulaic and a knee-jerk response. Pray before you eat.

Pray before you go to bed. Pray before Bible class. It is a matter of commitment.

I know whom I have believed. I know him. One day I will know even as I am known.

That's Paul's great hope. I'm persuaded. I'm convinced.

He is able to keep what I commit to him. So the more I commit to him, the more is going to be preserved and kept and multiplied in the eternal future. This is what we're after.

This is our goal. Don't be blown away by the wind of media, the wind of human talking. There are so many people who do so much talking in so many words.

The word capital W is what counts. This should be the grist in our mill. You can find

somebody that will support almost anything.

You can find people who will believe almost anything. As we go to break here, I'll tell you a funny thing. I was listening to somebody I met the other day and he's got an online thing.

And he surveys and calls out some of the more bizarre things that you might find. And I learned about this through watching him. But evidently Senator Romney, Mitt Romney, incurred an injury of some sort and blacked his eye and had a few stitches.

Well, this surfaced a belief amongst thousands of people that the Illuminati who decide who's in power and who's not have an initiation ritual. And you have to learn about pain. And so they smack you in the head.

And so they pull up pictures of the Pope had a black eye. President Bush had a black eye. Various actors and actresses, they've all had the black eye and it's usually the left eye.

If you see the left eye blacked, these people have joined the Illuminati and they're in the inner circle and now they've got power. There are thousands of people who believe in the black eye Illuminati initiation thing. Listen, they believe it and have as much faith in that as you and I have in the word of God.

The merit of faith is in the object. The author and finisher of our faith is the Lord Jesus Christ representing God the father. He is the way, he is the truth, he is the life.

We come to the father through him. There has never been an age, ever, not since Adam and Eve got pushed out of the garden has there been an age where there is so much overt, forceful deception at work as there is right now. How many times have we seen it in scripture? Do not be deceived.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

He that sows to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that sows to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. That is an absolute truth.

Sow into the spirit. The spirit connects us to the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus connects us to the father.

There is no other truth than that. That is the way, the truth and the life. And to the extent that we let these other things intrude and occupy our minds, we are going to be deceived.

Full commitment to the father who will keep those things against that day. When all of this, I love what Peter says. You know, what kind of people ought we to be knowing that all this stuff is gonna be rolled up like a scroll? The earth is, the elements are gonna melt

with a fervent heat.

All of this stuff is gonna melt. Nobody's gonna care whether there's a border wall or a piece of legislation or who got voted in and who got voted out and what rule and who went to school and who didn't and does Zoom work or does it not? It's all gonna melt. Build into eternity.

This is what Jesus is saying. Look at these people. They've got the eternal son of God right there in front of them and they wanna touch his clothes.

Let's not be those people. Do not be this tragically misled group. What is the tradition? What's the talk? What's the gossip? Why did all these people come and say, just touch his clothes, just touch his clothes.

All you gotta do is touch his clothes. Missing the biggest eternal truth there is standing right in front of them. This cannot be us.

Do not let this be us. If this is any of us at the judgment seat, we should not say we attended Grace and Truth Bible Church. We have seen it in scripture.

We have been fully exposed to the truth. Let's lay hold of that. Build your house on the rock.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna dive into chapter 15. And what Jesus has to say about this is so important.

And the quote that he is going to use is gonna take us back. You remember, anytime you see the Old Testament quoted in the New, it's a footnote. Gotta go back and read the whole thing.

It's not just the quoted verse, it's the context. This is fascinating. I can't wait to get back so we can look at this.

So we'll have our break. We'll have our wonderful special music. And then we'll be in Matthew chapter 15.