



Matthew 14:1-21

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING: MEETING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Jesus was primarily instructing the Twelve concerning the nature of the ministry for which they were being prepared. They would face multitudes who were shepherdless sheep and starved spiritually. It would be their responsibility to "give them something to eat." The followers of Christ do not have the ability of themselves to meet the spiritual need of the people, but when they make available what they have to the Lord, the Lord can take it and multiply it and use them to minister to the multitudes. The ministry belongs to the Lord, but it is carried on through His disciples as His agents. It is not what the disciples have that makes them good shepherds. Rather, it is what they give of themselves to the Lord that He can use to meet people's needs. To discharge this ministry entrusted to them, the disciples must depend on Him and make themselves available to Him. Only in this way can they be shepherds to the hungry sheep.

—J. Dwight Pentecost

The Messiah has come. The kingdom has been offered. The nation has rejected it. Thus, beginning in Matthew 13, there is a shift in Jesus' teaching and in His ministry. Though Jesus will continue to minister to the multitudes, His focus is now on training His disciples.

- A. Demonstration of Jesus' Qualifications as King (1-4)
- B. Sermon on the Mount: Who Can Enter the Kingdom? (5-7)**
- C. Miracles and Instruction (8-9)
- D. Instruction to the Twelve: Message for Israel (10)**
- E. Opposition: Israel's Rejection of Jesus (11-12)
- F. Parables of the Kingdom (13)**
- E'. Opposition: Israel's Rejection of Jesus (14-17)
- D'. Instruction to the Twelve: Message for Church (18)**
- C'. Miracles and Instruction (19-23)
- B'. Olivet Discourse: When Will the Kingdom Come? (24-25)**
- A'. Demonstration of Jesus' Qualifications as King (26-28)

In 14:1-21, Jesus' disciples learn three truths which are absolutely essential for their future mission of reaching the world with the gospel. These same truths are necessary for us to know as well.

1. WE LIVE IN AN _____ WORLD (14:1-12).

- Herod Antipas
- Herodias
- Salome

- **Herod the Great** (37-4 BC). Under Roman authority, he ruled over the land of Israel. He had nine wives and many sons, several of whom he killed (cf. Luke 1-2; Matt. 2). After his death, his kingdom was divided among three of his sons—Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip.
- **Herod Archelaus** (4BC-AD6). He reigned over half of Herod's kingdom, including Judea (Matt. 2:22).
- **Herod Antipas** (4BC-AD39). He reigned over the Galilee region (cf. Matt. 14; Mark 6; Luke 23).
- **Philip** (4BC-AD34). He reigned over the territory northeast of Galilee, a mostly Gentile region (cf. Lk. 3:1).
- **Herodias**. Granddaughter of Herod the Great. She was married to Herod Philip but divorced him to marry Herod Antipas (Mt. 14:3-6).
- **Salome**. Herodias' daughter by her former marriage. She is probably around 12-14 yrs. old at this time.

Such solo dances were grossly suggestive...and were regularly performed by professional entertainers of low character.

—D. Edmond Hiebert

Like most weak men, Herod feared to be thought weak.

—Edward H. Plumptre

- John the Baptist

2. WE FACE AN _____ TASK (14:13-17).

The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle (besides the resurrection) recorded in all four gospels (Mk. 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-15). In many ways, it is the perfect illustration of the task that we face as Jesus' disciples in this present world.

- There are multitudes of _____ people.
- There is the exhaustion of _____ needs.
- There is the reality of _____ resources.

3. WE HAVE AN _____ SAVIOR (14:18-21).

- Jesus is the _____ Shepherd.
- Jesus is the _____ Moses.
- Jesus is the _____ who satisfies our deepest needs.

WHAT IS OVERWHELMING YOU TODAY?

- Face the reality of your situation.
- Feel your inadequacy.
- Fall into the arms of Jesus.
- Find your strength in Him.
- Follow Him faithfully each day.

Death did not first strike Adam, the first sinful man; nor Cain, the first murderer; but Abel, the innocent and the righteous.

—Bishop Hall (1574-1656)

In the face of the world's need, your gifts and abilities may appear pitiful, but if you surrender them to Jesus, He can feed the multitudes.

—Vance Havner

Your extremity is God's opportunity. The difficulty all along has been to get to the end of you; for when a man gets to the end of himself, he has reached the beginning of God's working.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

The miracle took place in His hands, not in theirs; for whatever we give to Him, He can bless and multiply. We are not manufacturers; we are only distributors.

—Warren Wiersbe

The feeding of the 5000 is yet another of Jesus' messianic signs, placing Jesus in the line of God's provision of manna to Israel in the wilderness through Moses.

—Stephen L. Cox

Little is always much in the hands of Christ.

—William Barclay

The significance of this miracle was intended primarily for the disciples. Jesus was illustrating the kind of ministry they would have after His departure. They would be involved in feeding people, but with spiritual food. The source for their feeding would be the Lord Himself. When their supply ran out, they would need to return to the Lord for more. He would supply them, but the feeding would be done through them.

—Louis A. Barbieri, Jr.