

February 9

Scriptures: Read Matthew 14

Key Verse: “Be of good cheer! It is I, do not be afraid.” (Matthew 14:27)

Overview

Matthew takes a moment to tell us about Herod and his beheading of John the Baptist, then he gets into the remarkable miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus, who was involved in a very people-intensive ministry, seemed to have limitless capacity for giving out more and more, and showing a kind of inexhaustible compassion, to the point of actually and miraculously dividing five loaves of bread and two fish into enough to feed five thousand. But then, He also has the self-confidence to be able to dismiss the crowd. He gets into a boat and goes to the other side of the lake just to get away from them. He eats and runs!

After Jesus dismisses the crowd, He goes up by Himself into the hills to pray. Jesus placed priority again and again on quiet time with His Father. While He’s praying, His disciples are out on the lake. Suddenly they look up and see Jesus walking on the water. Their first reaction is, “It’s a ghost!” But Jesus speaks to them and says, “Take courage. It is I. Don’t be afraid.” And Peter, the impulsive fellow that he is, says, “Lord, if it is You tell me to come to You on the water.” Jesus says, “Come.” Peter gets out and walks on the water toward Jesus. But then, half way there, he realizes what he is doing and, beginning to sink, cries, “Lord, save me!” It would have been interesting if we had seen Peter walking all the way to Jesus and then turning around and walking back to the boat with Him. But, on the other hand, there is something refreshingly human about Peter’s reaction.

The response of the disciples to Jesus walking on the water is, “Truly, You are the Son of God.” And truly He was. When they got to the other side of the lake, the people there recognized Jesus and sent word to all the surrounding country, and brought all their sick to Him and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His cloak. And all who touched Him were healed.

Notice the human contest out of which Jesus’ ministry sprang. He dealt with hungry people, frightened disciples and needy, demanding miracle seekers. His ministry sprang out of the very stuff of human existence.

Prayer

It is with great relief, Lord, that we find the disciples were as human as we are, yet You used them so mightily. Use us, oh God, as Your strength is made perfect in our weakness.