



Sermon Discussion Questions: Matthew 14-16

Matthew 14:1-12

1. Have you ever experienced a personal tragedy? What were the circumstances? How did it impact you?
2. In this passage, we see the end of John the Baptist's life. What sticks out to you most about this story and why?
3. How are we as Christians to think about persecution and martyrdom? What truths from God's Word can we remember to give us clarity, encouragement, and hope in the midst of tribulation?
4. While martyrdom is not a present-day experience for Americans, there were more Christians worldwide put to death for their faith in the 21st century than all other centuries combined. Spend some time in prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ (including our gospel partners) who are in harm's way. If you need some direction, visit persecution.com and click on their global prayer guide or come to First Thursday Prayer.

Matthew 14:13-21

1. Share a time when God miraculously provided for you. What happened? How was your faith encouraged?
2. Despite Jesus grieving over the loss of John the Baptist, Jesus still responded to the crowds with compassion. How does this speak to His character? How might that encourage and inspire us?
3. When the crowds had a need for food, how do the disciples respond? How does Jesus respond? What can we learn?
4. Jesus provides miraculously for the crowd and the disciples. What sticks out to you about this story?
5. How do you long for God to provide for you today? Spend some time in prayer.

Matthew 14:22-33

1. Share a story about a frightening storm. What were the circumstances? How did it impact you and your faith? What did you learn about God?
2. After a Jesus dismissed the crowds, He went up to pray by Himself. Why was this significant? How might Jesus' practice of prayer speak to you when you're weary?
3. What were the circumstances surrounding Jesus' miracle. Put yourself in the disciples' shoes—how would you have felt?
4. How does Peter respond to Jesus? How are you similar or different than him?
5. What do we learn about Jesus from this story? How is Jesus inviting you to "step out of the boat" right now? Spend some time praying for one another as a group.

Matthew 14:34-15:20

1. Share a time when you got really dirty!
2. This passage speaks of laws of defilement, washing, and clean/unclean things. What was this all about? Can you relate it to anything common to us?
3. How does Jesus respond to the Pharisees' concerns about washing hands? What can we learn from Him about God's view of outward vs inward purity?
4. Jesus says that what comes from the heart is what defiles a person. What does that mean?
5. What is currently in your heart that's proceeding from your mouth? How might your group pray for you?

Matthew 15:21-28

1. Share a time you were desperate for the Lord to answer you. What were the circumstances? How did God respond to you? What did you learn about Him through this difficult?
2. What were the circumstances of the woman in this story?
3. How does Jesus initially respond to this woman's plea for help? Why do you think He responds this way?
4. How does the woman respond to Jesus? What does it reveal about her faith?
5. How might this story speak to your situation right now? What do you think the Lord is trying to teach you? How might you persevere in waiting on Him? Spend some time as a group praying for one another.

Matthew 15:29-39

1. Share a time God performed a miracle (small or big) in your life. What were the circumstances? What did you learn about God? How did your faith grow?
2. This passage includes many miracles. Imagine what it must have been like for the crowds.
3. Jesus miraculously feeds 4,000 men, plus women and children! What is similar and different about this story compared to the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew 14? What do you think was Jesus' intent with this miracle?
4. Where do you long for God to do a miracle? How might this passage give you hope for now? For the future when Jesus returns?
5. Spend some time in prayer as a group for one another.

Matthew 16:1-12

1. Like the disciples, we are so prone to forget! Share a story when you forgot something and what happened as a result.
2. Jesus has a similar conversation with the Pharisees and Sadducees about looking for signs (see Matthew 12:38ff). It's like they forgot! What does this reveal about their hearts? About Jesus' heart in His response?
3. Jesus warns the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. What does He mean? How might we apply His instructions to our own lives?
4. Jesus connects the disciples' lack of faith with their forgetfulness. How does one impact the other? How might your forgetfulness be impacting your faith right now?
5. Take some time to remember what God has done for you. Now, spend some time as a group in prayer to both give thanks for how He's helped in the past and to ask for His help in the present and future.

Matthew 16:13-20

1. If someone were to ask you who you really are, what would you say?
2. Jesus asks His disciples who people say that He is. Talk about the different answers and what they revealed about their understanding of Jesus and the Scriptures.
3. Peter calls Jesus "the Christ, the Son of the living God." What does this title mean and why is it significant? If Jesus really does fulfill this title, how should that reality impact your life today?
4. Jesus responds to Peter's reply with some weighty words. What do they mean? What do they not mean? How have you seen them fulfilled thus far? How might they give us hope for the future?
5. Of all the truths revealed in this passage, what is most important to you right now and why?

Matthew 16:21-28

1. Share a time you knew God was calling you to do something hard. What were the circumstances? What did you learn? How did God bring good out of it?
2. Jesus reveals to His disciples that His pathway to glory would come through the cross. What are some different responses people have to this message, including Peter's?
3. When did you first understand the gospel? Why was it so special to you then and now? Who do you long to believe the good news right now?
4. Jesus says that anyone who wants to be His disciple must take up his cross and follow Him. What does it look like for you to follow Jesus today?
5. Jesus also says that He will reward those who follow Him. How might that promise help you to persevere right now?
6. Spend some time praying for unbelievers to come to faith in Jesus and for one another to follow Jesus in the midst of suffering.