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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-888-734-7707/ www.preceptsforlife.com

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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 25 – Faith: A Growing Process

FRIDAY

OPEN

Do you remember, Beloved, those first days when you came to know Jesus Christ? You prayed and you saw God answer. It seemed like you saw His hand on every corner as He directed your paths and your faith grew and grew and grew. And finally it had matured so much that it didn't matter, necessarily, that you saw the wonder of it all because you knew the God behind the wonder. This is what happened on the shores of the Galilee where I'm standing.

PART ONE

When the news of the death of John the Baptist reached the ears of Jesus, when He heard that His cousin's head had been presented on a platter before Herod (See Mark 6:27-28), He was grieved. He had to be by Himself. The crowds were following Him and what He did was He withdrew to a secluded place. (See Matthew 14:13) Let's look at it Matthew chapter 14. In Matthew

chapter 14 it says in verse 13, **“Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. [And] He went ashore, [and] He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.” (Matthew 14:13-14)** And it doesn’t say that He was grieved, but you have to know that if He had to go and if He had to be by Himself, He wanted to be in a secluded place. Yet what you see is the compassion of His heart for the people overruling the circumstances. And it says, **“[And] when it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, ‘This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go...to the villages and buy food for themselves.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!’ [And] they said to Him, ‘We [only] have ... five loaves and two fish.’ And He said, ‘Bring them here to Me.’ [And] ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food...:” “Baruch Ha-Shem Adonai.” (Matthew 14:15-19) He gave the blessing, the Jewish blessing. And it says, **“...He gave [it] to the disciples, and the disciples gave [it] to the crowds, and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets.” (Matthew 14:19-20)** Twelve full baskets, when all they had were five loaves and two fish. **“There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.” (Matthew 14:21)** In all probability on that day, He fed approximately 15,000 people, 5,000 men, but 15,000 people, when here He was finding out about the death of His cousin, wanting to be by Himself, but seeing the multitudes and feeling compassion upon them, because they knew where He was and they were following Him. They were following Him because He was doing miracles. Now He’s going to feed them bread because He has compassion on them. But who is really the student in all of this? Who’s the one that is really learning? Is it the**

multitudes that have come because of the miracles He's doing? Or is Jesus doing this for the benefit of His disciples? Because He says to His disciples, "What do you have? You give them something to eat. You give them something to eat." And they know that they don't have enough "something" to give them to eat. They only have five loaves. They only have two fish. There's 5,000 men and all those women and all those children. It's ridiculous. It would only go just for a few and it would be gone. But He says, "Give them what you have." And what they find is when they give what they have, now watch. When they give what they have and it's supposed to run out, it's multiplied. When they give what they have under His direction, under His commandments, then a multitude is fed. What is He doing? He's building their faith. They're standing there in absolute utter amazement as they watch this happen. And what they find out is this, you give what you have and there's plenty left over afterwards. There were twelve baskets left over afterwards. There was more than enough. What are we seeing? That He is the God of the super-abundance. He is the God of [exceedingly beyond what we can ask or think.] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 3:20) He is the supernatural God. And all we have to do is follow Him. All we have to do is listen to His words. What did the disciples do? Did they say, "It's no use. It's no use. I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to do it. I'll look like a fool. There's a multitude and I'm going to give them five loaves and two fish." No. He told them, "Give them the food." He gave them the food and God multiplied the food. He's building their faith. And it says in verse 22, "[And] **immediately He made the disciples get [in] the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side....**" (Matthew 14:22) So they're by the shores of the Galilee where I am now. He's telling them, "I want you to get in the boat right away and I want you to go to the other side of the sea." And it says, "[And] **after He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray....**" (14:23) On the mountain. You know when you read through the gospel of Matthew and you see Jesus in the

region of the Galilee, you keep hearing Him say, “The mountain, the mountain.” It wasn’t a mountain. There’s lots of mountains around here. But it was the mountain that they went to. I wonder if Jesus had a special mountain where He would go to be with the Father, where He would go to the “secluded place” where He could converse with His Father. Now you want to mark the word, “pray.” And you want to mark it because every time you see the word, “pray” or “supplication” or “petition” or “ask” or “cry”, if it’s talking about “crying to God,” you want to mark it. And you want to mark it in a very distinguishable way so that you will see it throughout the Word of God, because Beloved, that’s where you learn about prayer. That’s where you get God’s precepts on prayer. And so you don’t go off target, and you don’t follow the teachings of men, but you follow the teachings of God. And it says, “...And when it was evening, He was there alone.”

(Matthew 14:23) Finally, He’s alone with the Father. And it says, “**But the boat was already a long distance [away] from the land....**” **(Matthew 14:24)** Now if we would compare this with John chapter 6 where we have the same account of the feeding of the 5,000, and by the way, all the gospels mention this. It’s so significant. And so, if we were to read John chapter 6, verse 19 we would see that they had rowed about three to four miles. So they’re three to four miles out in the Sea of Galilee. And it says, “**But the boat [had] already [been] a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.**” **(Matthew 14:24)** If you go to the north of the Sea of Galilee you see the formation of the mountains and it’s like, it’s a big wind tunnel. And the wind would come whipping through there and all of a sudden you could be on the sea and all would be calm, and all of a sudden the boat is being tossed to and fro because the wind brings up the waves, and all of a sudden you’re in danger. Well, it says, “**But the boat was already a long distance [away...it was] battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.**” **(Matthew 14:24-25)** The fourth watch of the

night is between 3 and 6 a.m. For that long He had been with the Father. For that long He had been conversing with the Father. But His eye was on the disciples. He knew what was happening on the sea. He knew that the wind was contrary. He knew that the boat was being tossed to and fro. “[And] **when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea...**” (Matthew 14:26) and I want you to stop and just think. He’s separated from them. Physically, He’s separated from them, but He knows where they are. He knows what is going on. This is not a calm sea. This is a rough sea. And He wants to be with them. He wants to comfort them. And so, as He walks on the sea, all of a sudden they see Him, and it’s like a ghost. It’s like a ghost. What is happening? Well, listen to what it says. [“...And they cried out, ‘It is a ghost!’ They were terrified, absolutely terrified. And they cried out in fear.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 14:26) **“But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.’”** (Matthew 14:27) In the storms of life, Beloved, God is always there. Jesus says in Hebrews chapter 13 that [“He will never leave us. He will never forsake us, so that you and I, as children of God can say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do to me.’”] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 13:5-6) So they see Jesus coming across the water. They think it’s a ghost. They’re terrified, when really, the One that is walking to them is the Prince of peace, the peace that God gives, not that He calms the storms, but rather, that He calms the heart. **“[And] Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’”** (Matthew 14:28) Is it really You? Is it a ghost or is it really You? And watch what Jesus says. **“And He said, ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of [that] boat....”** He was out of that boat **“...and [he] walked on ... water and [he] came toward Jesus.”** (14:29) Oh, what faith had been built. Oh, he had seen Him calm the sea before. He knew who He was. He knew He was the Messiah. He had seen Him heal the sick, make the lame walk, make the blind see, make the deaf hear, raise the dead. His faith had been built and it had come to that point where he could say, [“Lord, if it’s

You on the water then command that I come to me”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 14:28) and he could get out of the boat and he could walk on the water until all of a sudden, all of a sudden he looked at the waves that had been created by the wind and he started to sink. (See Matthew 14:30) He started to sink. He was walking on water and now he’s sinking. And what is his cry? “...**Lord, save me!**” (Matthew 14:30) What is going on? What is Jesus doing? What is happening to Peter? We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Welcome back, Beloved, to the shores of the Galilee. It is only Matthew that records this incident for us, of two men who walked on the sea. The first was Jesus who walked in His power. The second was Peter who walked in faith, who walked in faith for a little while. Remember? He sees Jesus on the water. He thinks it’s a ghost and Jesus says to him, “...**Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid. [And] Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’**” (Matthew 14:27-28) Now listen to the faith. “If it is You, You can command me to come to You on the water. You can command me to walk on water.” “**And [Jesus] said, ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.**” (Matthew 14:29) It’s a walk of faith. It’s a walk of obedience. It’s a walk of taking God at His word. “**But seeing the wind....**” (Matthew 14:30) You don’t see the wind, but you see the affects of the wind. “**But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’**” (Matthew 14:30) You see, Precious One, fear and faith cannot go together. Fear and faith cannot live at the same time. And the minute that we turn in fear then we’re forgetting our faith. And the minute that we turn in fear, then what happens is we begin to sink in that situation. What kind of a situation are you in, Precious One? What kind of a difficulty are you going through? What seems absolutely impossible? You can either sink in that situation or you can walk on water, so to speak.

You can override the winds. You can walk in faith. Now remember Jesus is building the faith of His disciples. He is giving them incident after incident where they can learn to trust in Him. But what happens to Peter is, he looks at the circumstances. And the minute that he takes his eyes off of Jesus he begins to sink. And that's what's going to happen to you. There's a great lesson here for us. ["Remember without faith it's impossible to please God. Those who come to Him must believe that He is."] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 11:6) He is what? He is God. There is nothing too difficult for Him. Remember in Jeremiah the Lord says, **"...Is there anything too difficult for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27)** And the answer is "No. There is nothing too difficult for You. You are God." And you and I need to remember that. And you need to remember also that when you take your eyes off of Him and you begin to sink, the way that you get out of the water, the way that you overcome the sinking feeling is to cry, **"...Lord; save me!" (Matthew 14:30)** It's not to begin to swim. It's not to begin to fight the waves. It's not to begin to go under and to come up again gasping for air. Rather it is simply to say to the Lord, **"...Lord; save me!" (Matthew 14:30)** He knows the weakness of our flesh. He knows that we are but dust. But He promises also that, **"Now unto Him [who] is able to keep [us] from falling..." (Jude 1:24, KJV)** and to make us stand secure before Him. We stand secure, Beloved, by faith. So let's look at what it says. "[And] **immediately Jesus stretched out His hand took hold of him, and [He] said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'**" ['Why did you doubt?']" **(Matthew 14:31)** I want to take you to two other places where He has already said this. In Matthew chapter 6 in verse 30 this is the passage from the Sermon on the Mount. What He is saying to them is that you and I can trust Him to provide for us. That's Matthew chapter 6 and it is verse 30. It says, **"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? [O] you of little faith!" (Matthew 6:30)** What is He doing? He's

building their faith. What is He doing? He's telling them, "Trust Me, trust Me. Learn to take Me at My word." And then in chapter 8, in verse 26 of Matthew it says this. And this is when He gets into the boat and when there's another storm on the sea, and Jesus is asleep and they wake Him up and they say, **"...Save us Lord; we are perishing! [And] He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?' [And] He got up and [He] rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm."**

(Matthew 8:25-26) You of little faith. What is He showing us? I can clothe you. I can calm the sea. I can stop the storm. And I want you to know that I'm not going to lose you. And so when we go back to Matthew chapter 14 I would put those verses in my Bible. But then I would also, jumping ahead, go to Matthew chapter 16, verse 8. And here they're wondering: Where are they going to get bread? They have seen Him walk on water. They have seen Him calm the storm. They have seen Him feed the multitude. And yet, they are ah discussing among themselves when He says, **"...Watch out ...[for] the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees...."** They're saying,

"....He said that because we did not bring any bread." (Matthew 16:6-7)

And He's the One that's able to multiply the bread. **"But Jesus, aware of this, said, 'You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? Or [of] the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up?'"** He says, **"How is it that you do not understand....," (Matthew 16:8-11)** what I'm saying to you? **"...Men of little faith...." (Matthew 16:8)** He wants to take little faith and make it stronger because very soon He's going to die. He's going to be buried. He's going to be resurrected and He wants their faith to be able to handle it all. Well it says, **"Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' [And] when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in**

the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘You [certainly are] God’s Son!’”
(Matthew 14:31-33) And that’s what He wanted them to see. He wanted them to know that He was the Christ, the Son of God. “[And] **when they had crossed over, they came to [the] land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word ...to all that surrounding district and brought [all] to Him [those] who were sick; and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak...**” and remember we’ve talked about that, “**...and as many as touched it were cured.**” **(Matthew 14:34-36)** And yet you know what, it was the disciples that benefited the most, because the disciples recognized that He was the Son of God. O Precious One, if Jesus Christ is your Savior He is the Son of God. He is one with the Father. And [“He who chose you in Him before the foundation of the world,”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 1:4) is going to complete that which pertains to you. He is going to keep you. He is going to preserve you. He’s going to let you go through the storms. He’s going to let you, at times, doubt, but He’s there to rescue you. And all you have to do is cry, “**...Lord; save me!**” **(Matthew 14:30)** And He will hear. He will rescue. Nothing can happen to you in your life without His permission. And if it does happen it’s going to work together for your good and His glory because you belong to the One who is the Son of God. Don’t be a woman or a man of little faith, Precious One. Build your faith. You build your faith by doing what we’re doing, studying the Word of God. Because “**...Faith comes [by] hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” **(Romans 10:17)**