



Lesson 14. . . Learning to Walk in the Supernatural Life The Gospel of Matthew

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Notes From the Podium

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***These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson.
Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.***

Matthew 14:1-36

I. Herod the Tetrarch

- A. Son of Herod the Great, the Edomite
 - 1. Given $\frac{1}{4}$ of Herod the Great's kingdom to rule
 - 2. Church Fathers say that although he was given the kingdom to rule, he himself was ruled by his libidinous desires.
- B. John the Baptist preaches against him because of his marriage to his brother's wife, Herodias.
- C. He encounters our Lord.
- D. He is enslaved by his own passions.
- E. His first wife is the daughter of King Eratus of Arabia
 - 1. Herod divorced her to marry his brother's wife, Herodias.
 - 2. Herod is infatuated with Herodias' daughter Salome.

II. We find Herod in his tower throwing a party for himself.

- A. "Macherus"- Herod's tower, which is positioned upon a rocky citadel 3500 ft. above the Dead Sea. (Revealed to us by Flavious Josephus, Jewish Historian)
- B. Jews did not normally celebrate birthdays.

III. Herod believes John the Baptist to be raised from the Dead.

- A. Background provided here by St. Matthew.
 - 1. Herod had seized John the Baptist and held him in prison.
 - 2. John the Baptist had preached that Herod's current marriage to Herodias was not lawful because she was still the wife of Herod's brother Philip.
 - 3. At Herod's birthday party, Herodias' daughter, Salome danced for Herod.
 - 4. Herod was pleased with Salome such that he promised to give her whatever she asked for up to half of his kingdom.
- B. Consider the scene:
 - 1. A king is throwing a feast for himself.
 - 2. Guests are invited not out of generosity or love but so that the king may "feed" upon them (for the guests are before him giving him adulation and their king).
- C. Herod: A gaping mouth of desire
 - 1. His eyes devour Herodias' daughter, Salome.
 - 2. Once his desire is satiated he wishes to respond in turn.
 - a. A perverse type of generosity, common to those who are inebriated
 - b. Oaths and grand statements: "I will give you anything you ask for even up to half of my kingdom".
 - c. Herod is generous only because he has already completely devoured Salome.
 - 3. To love is to give oneself to another; in contrast, this exchange is mutual devouring.
 - a. The inverse of genuine love
 - b. Motivated by greed on behalf of both parties
 - i. Herod has feed on Salome and is "pleased"

- ii. Salome in turn is allowed to *feed* on Herod with his promise to grant whatever she wishes.
 - D. Salome looks to her mother, Herodias
 - 1. Herodias tells Salome to ask for John the Baptist's head.
 - 2. Salome, caught up in this grotesque feast adds "...on a platter".
 - 3. John the Baptist is killed and his head is presented on a platter.
- IV. "And the disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus."
 - A. Our Lord describes Herod as a "vixen" (female fox) –Luke 13:32
 - 1. Reveals Herod's character
 - 2. He is weak and furtive in his desires and only seeks to satisfy himself.
 - B. Herod will not even be spoken to by our Lord.
 - 1. "Go and tell that fox..."
 - 2. Later when our Lord is presented before him, he offers not a word.
 - 3. There is no point in throwing out seed on that soil.
- V. Contrast Herod's grotesque banquet with this next feast.
 - A. Our Lord will not feed upon his people, but will feed his people.
 - B. A sign of what our Lord will do when he feeds his people with himself.
 - C. Not in a dark tower, but in an open field.
- VI. Upon hearing the news of John the Baptist, "...Jesus withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place."
 - A. He suffers in His human nature.
 - B. The crowds followed on foot from towns
 - 1. Jesus had compassion on them
 - a. "Compassion" – the interior movement that takes place in our Lord when He sees our condition.
 - b. In Greek this word "compassion" has a very graphic meaning, like viscera turning over in Him.
 - c. Even His body reacts to human suffering
- VII. "...the disciples said...send these crowds away..." to "buy food for themselves".
 - A. This Host will not send them away but will provide for them, a sign that He will ultimately feed them with His own body and blood.
 - B. Jesus tells the disciples to feed the crowds themselves – something they cannot do by natural ability.
 - 1. The exact instructions that our Lord will give to His disciples throughout salvation history and to their successors.
 - 2. Indeed the faithful will be feed off the sacrifice of the apostles and all the men who follow them, offering their lives for others through the instrumentality of the priesthood.
 - 3. The flocks are fed not by their own natural abilities, but by the submission of their own flesh and blood to Christ.
 - C. Only 5 loaves and 2 fish
 - 1. Reminiscent of the parables we have seen where something small would yield such and incredible harvest.
 - 2. Consider our offering at the Holy Eucharist.
 - a. Flat unleavened bread
 - b. Bad wine
 - 3. This inequality between what we offer Him and what He gives to us is precisely the point to catch here.
 - a. That which is nothing becomes everything.
 - b. That which is impoverished becomes rich.

- c. That which was bread and wine becomes the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, our Lord.

VIII. When exactly does the miracle take place?

- A. In the Mass? –sometime when the bread and wine passes through the priests hands.
- B. Here? –read your text.
 - 1. Jesus orders the people to sit down on the grass.
 - a. Reminiscent of Psalm 23 (incidentally Church Fathers see all 7 sacraments in the 23rd psalm).
 - b. Reclining is the position of eating in the Jewish culture.
 - 2. “...and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing...”
 - a. This part of the Eucharistic prayer does not come from the accounts of the Last Supper, but is lifted from this passage.
 - b. This phrase is lifted from this passage here, assigning it the significance that it is a foreshadowing of the Holy Mass.
 - 3. The miracle occurs at some point as He blessed, broke and gave.
 - a. As it passed through His hands there was more.
 - b. Every time it passed through the apostles hands there was more.
 - 4. The text never tells us exactly when the miracle takes place.
 - a. It just points to the reality of it being held by Him, in His hands and that it passes from His hands through the apostles’ hands to the people who are reclining in the field and are fed.
 - b. This continues to our day: From Christ’s hands to the priests’ hands to the faithful who are reclining in the very rest of the savior.
 - c. In that position of kneeling adoration, the flock is fed with Christ, Himself.

IX. More parallels to the Holy Eucharist

- A. “And all were satisfied”
 - 1. Satisfied that which we had desired
 - 2. The Beatitudes
- B. 12 baskets with broken pieces left over.
 - 1. 12 – symbolic of the 12 tribes and of fullness
 - 2. “klasmaton/klasmata” – broken fragments (the same word used in Ex 16 for the manna)
 - 3. The klasmata spoken of in Exodus could not be saved from day to day, the Israelites had to trust that God would provide each day.
 - 4. Here the klasmata is to be saved (John’s Gospel).
 - 5. We are to feed and reserve with plentiful amounts.
 - 6. The Didache (the teaching) speaks of the “klasmata” interchangeably with the word “Eucharist”.
 - 7. These Klasmata, fragments left over, are reserved in the Blessed Sacrament, because He remains with us. We keep it in the basket, the tabernacle, and we are fed every time we come to him in that reclining posture of the Holy Mass.

X. After the feeding of the 5000

- A. “...he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side...”
 - 1. He gets the disciples out of there.
 - 2. There is no doubt a frenzy going on after the miracle that has been witnessed.
- B. “...and he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.”
 - 1. The Father is never far away.
 - 2. Jesus is always in conversation, in communion, with His Father.
 - 3. Often Jesus will pull the disciples away for this very reason, to teach them how to pray, how to be in communion with the Father.

XI. Meanwhile the disciples are enduring 8-12 hours of very rough seas.

- A. "...being tossed about by the waves for the wind was against it"
- B. Our Lord does not come to their aid immediately, not until the 4th watch.
 - 1. He walks to them on the tumultuous waves.
 - 2. Water has always been a sign of chaos and of man's finitude. Man cannot overcome the forces of nature.
 - 3. Our Lord walks easily on the rough waters because He is the author of creation and it serves Him.
 - 4. Upon seeing Him the disciples are terrified and think He is a ghost.
 - 5. "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."
 - a. Love is the only thing that casts out fear.
 - b. His disciples recognize His voice.
 - 6. Peter's fear is overcome and he asks Jesus to bid him to come to Him on the water.
 - a. Jesus says "Come".
 - b. St. Augustine says the "pondus amoris", the weight of love bore him up because of the one thing he wanted. His desire of live overcame fear and was the thing that kept him afloat.
 - c. The water didn't receive him, because he was walking out to be received by the Son of God and so nature served him as it once did before the fall.
 - d. "But when he sees the wind..."
 - i. Peter takes his eyes off of the one that he loves.
 - ii. The Church Fathers say, "Where the eye is there is the heart; where the eye is there is love".
 - iii. He sees the waves but he doesn't see Christ, the only thing that would allow him to overcome his fear.
 - iv. The fear returns and he begins to sink.
 - v. Peter cries out "Lord save me!" and our Lord *immediately* reaches out and grabs him.
 - vi. We don't know what would have happened had Peter made it.
 - 7. "Oh man of little faith..."
 - a. 2 minds – one for Christ and one for creation.
 - b. So often we don't allow faith to be single-minded.
 - 8. "And when they got into the boat the wind ceased"
 - a. Not until then did the wind's cease.
 - b. "And those in the boat worshipped him saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'."