

## *A note from Kathy*

*Do you ever wonder if Jesus really understands all you are going through? Isaiah 53:3 says, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering." As we study Matthew 14, we will see Jesus experienced all of the trials that we do, and more. Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*

## *Observation*

1. Do you recall the events of Matthew 13? How did the chapter end? Jesus was in Nazareth, but what did it say about his ability to minister there?
2. Matthew 14 starts off with one of the most gruesome stories in the Bible. Where was John the Baptist? Why was he there?
3. What had John done that got him arrested?
4. What special event was being celebrated? Make a list of those present at this event.
5. What was the entertainment for this celebration?
6. What was the payment offered for this entertainment in verse 7? (You may want to look at Mark 6:22-23.)
7. In spite of the fact that Herod feared the people's reaction to such a horrible deed, what did he do?
8. Faithful followers of John came to the prison and took his body and buried it; what did they do after that?
9. What was Jesus' response when he heard what had happened to John?
10. The minute Jesus' boat hit the shore, what does scripture say that he did?
11. What time of day was it in verse 15? The disciples tried to encourage Jesus to send the people away; it was getting late and they would need to find food. What was Jesus' response?
12. The disciples were probably confused by Jesus' idea that they could care for the needs of such a large crowd of people. How much food did the disciples have?

13. What did Jesus do with what they had?
14. What was the result of this attitude of gratitude for God's provision?
  - **All** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **All** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Disciples gathered** \_\_\_\_\_
15. In verse 22 Jesus instructed the disciples to get in the boat and set sail while he dismissed the crowd. What did Jesus do now that he was alone?
16. The scripture says that during the fourth watch (3 am – 6 am), Jesus walked out to meet the disciples. When the disciples saw him what did they believe it was?
17. Peter must have recognized Jesus' voice because what did he do? This was an amazing step of faith. What happened next? What stole Peter's attention away from Jesus?
18. What did Jesus do for Peter?
19. The disciples were watching all this from the boat. What did the disciples acknowledge and what were they moved to do?
20. Jesus and the disciples landed the boat, and the people recognized Jesus. Word had traveled all around that area. Some may have been in the crowd when Jesus was in other towns. We don't know how exactly they recognized Jesus, but they did. What did they do next?
21. The people recognized this man who healed the sick, raised the dead, restored sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear and the lame to walk, but did they really know Jesus?

## *Application*

1. Have you ever been overwhelmed by rejection, terrible news, or the unending demand of all there is to do every day? Then you may have a glimpse of the events going on in Jesus' life at that time. How do you handle it when it feels like everything is falling down around you?
2. Have you ever just wanted to get away? Scripture says that Jesus got in a boat and tried to get away privately. Why do you believe he would do this? What do you suppose he was doing on that boat? Sleeping? Recalling better times from the past? Wishing life was different? Or talking to his Father? Next time you are overwhelmed by the events of life, do you believe this will help you walk through it with confidence, knowing that

God feels your pain, he hears your prayers, he sees your tears, and he is moved to have compassion on you?

3. Even in Jesus' time of personal sadness, he had compassion on the suffering of others. I do not know what you are experiencing at this time, but if you look around can you see the suffering of others? Perhaps there is something you could do to help? We cannot fix every problem, but we can show compassion and do what we can.
4. You have probably heard the expression, "Little is much when God is in it." Instead of looking at our great need, what should we do with what we have?
5. So often people focus on Peter's fear and the fact that Jesus had to save him, but I believe it took great faith to step out of a boat that was already in a storm. Is there someone close to you that is taking a step of faith that you might be able to encourage, someone who needs your prayers and support?
6. People still come to Jesus for a multitude of reasons. Some may value the life lessons that can be gleaned by listening to his words. Some come to Jesus in need of a healing. But the greatest reason to come to Jesus is salvation. It is a finished work. There is nothing we must do to earn it or deserve it. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us it is a gift to be accepted or rejected, it is each individual's choice. We would love to hear from you and pray with you if this is something you would like to do.