

Wil Owens
Same Miracle. New Message. Matt 15:32-39
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Introduction –Studying Scripture verse-by-verse allows us to glean as much fruit as we can from every single passage we study. Sometimes though it’s good to take a step back from a single text and see how it text fits in the larger message of the book. That’s how I picture today’s study. If you recall, we’ve titled the study of Matthew “The King and His Kingdom.” How does this passage fit into that larger theme?

We begin to see that by first taking a tiny step back to see how ch15 and ch14 are joined not just numerically but also thematically. In fact when you read 14 and 15, it’s almost like history repeating itself. The similarities between them become so evident, you begin to see there is a message here much larger than simply relaying accounts of Jesus’ ministry.

Remember the Canaanite woman’s expression of faith was of the very same kind as the people in Gennesaret in ch14. She said, “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” They implored Christ to just touch the fringe of His garment.” For her, a crumb would suffice. For them, the fringe would suffice.

Here’s another example. Before Jesus feeds the crowds of 5000+ in ch14, He healed their sick. As we studied last week, before Jesus feeds this crowd of 4000+, He heals all their sick. In ch14, the miracle feeding flowed from the basis of Jesus’ compassion. In ch15, the same foundation is pointed out. When we read ch15 we know we’ve seen this before, but when we see it again, we begin to see an even larger, greater message unfolding.

- I. The Same Jesus and the Same Miracle
 - a. Let’s make some comparisons and then we’ll observe one key lesson.
 - b. Comparisons.
 - i. We’ve already noted this unbelievable demonstration of Jesus’ sufficiency and His provision was brought forth from His heart of great compassion. He says here, “I have compassion on the crowd, and I am unwilling to send them away hungry.” There is a wealth of theological treasure in that statement from Christ!

- ii. The menu is the same – loaves and fish
- iii. The distribution is the same – Christ gives thanks, breaks the meal, gives it to the disciples, and they give to the crowd.
- iv. The experience is the same – all ate until they were satisfied.
- v. The result was the same – an abundance of leftovers.
- vi. The initial reaction of the disciples is the same – even though it is Christ, the Son of God, the One whom they have witnessed accomplish the impossible – for three days Jesus has healed every kind of disease and disability and malady you can imagine – even though they have just witnessed this massive display of the power, provision, and grace of Christ, they still question, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?”
 - 1. And right there lies the key lesson.

c. Lesson.

- i. When you read ch14 and then ch15, you wonder if the disciples have entirely lost their short-term memory. You think, “Guys, you witnessed Jesus feed over 5000 not that long ago. This is just over 4000. How did you forget so soon?”
- ii. And yet as soon as we ask that question, the Spirit pricks our own heart, doesn’t He?
- iii. Let’s give the disciples a little room here. It takes us a couple of minutes to read ch14 and 15. In real time, days have passed. Many things have transpired; a lot of travel, confrontation, they entered new territory, and the context is not the same.
- iv. Now all of a sudden, our questioning of the disciples’ memory begins to look more like a mirror as we see our own reflection in them.
- v. God has demonstrated His faithfulness and power and provision in our lives over and over and over again. And yet, let a little time pass, let some weary days go by, let the circumstance change a bit, and we too begin to wring our hands and worry and fret and wonder what in the world we are going to do in this situation! How is it possible to endure this trial? How can we feed so great a crowd?
- vi. The key lesson for us is this, dear friends: The day might be different. The scenery might be different. But Jesus is the

same! He is able. He is our provision. He will accomplish through us and with us and for us what we could never accomplish on our own. And He is faithful to do it over and over and over again even when our faith falters from a loss of short-term memory.

- II. The Difference is in the Details
 - a. There's not only a lesson in a comparison of these miracles, there is a lesson in the contrast as well.
 - b. Contrast.
 - i. We've already mentioned the difference in number, 5000 and 4000.
 - ii. The difference in number also extends to the menu items. What was 5 loaves and 2 fish is now 7 loaves and a few small fish.
 - iii. Then there are the leftovers. 12 baskets before. 7 baskets now.
 - iv. In ch14 it seems that one day has passed. Here 3 days have passed.
 - v. It's the same miracle – Jesus feeds a multitude with one meal. But yet it's not exactly the same miracle is it? The numbers are all different. The details are all different. And right there is the lesson.
 - c. One lesson is that since Jesus is the same Jesus, if He is sufficient before, He'll be sufficient again. It's the lesson for the short-term memory of our faith. But with a little fine tuning on the details, we see this lesson become even sharper in its focus.
 - d. Since everything about this looks different than before, Mr Doubt lifts his ever-ready head to whisper, "Now we know Jesus could take care of that other situation. We know He was sufficient for that. But this? This is different. This crowd has been here longer. You won't fill them up with one meal! I don't think Jesus can handle this one! It's all up to you."
 - e. And once again Jesus shows – No, it's all up to Him, through you. If you can believe Him for crowd A, you can believe Him for crowd B. He is the sufficient Savior!

- III. Why Would Matthew Record A Second Feeding Miracle?
- a. In my younger days when I read through the Bible, I would read the miracle of the 5000 and then comes the miracle of the 4000. I would think, “Why even tell that one Matthew? 5000 is more than 4000. Wouldn’t you want to build the plot. Why didn’t you tell about the 4000 and then tell about the 5000? That would have a greater impact, wouldn’t it?”
 - b. Well that’s just like a young know-it-all Western mind isn’t it? It’s all about the numbers. But for Matthew, the greater impact, the escalating plot is not in the numbers! In fact, maybe that’s why the numbers are fewer here than before – so we don’t get sidetracked by the numbers and miss the better, greater, more thrilling message! The impact is in the context, not the numbers!
 - c. Matthew has been careful and precise in his language to alert us to the fact that from ch14 to ch15, Jesus has left Jewish territory and has entered Gentile territory.
 - i. V21 – He withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon
 - ii. V22 – this is a Canaanite woman
 - iii. V31 – they glorified the God of Israel
 - iv. Vv33 – He’s on the desolate side of the Sea of Galilee
 - d. For 3 days, Jesus healed swarms of Gentiles! He shows Himself as the Sufficient One with overflowing abundance to a weary, hungry crowd of Gentiles! Even though He made it clear to the Canaanite woman that His primary mission was to call Jews into the kingdom, He makes it abundantly clear, 7 baskets of leftovers clear, that He also calls Gentiles!
 - e. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is also the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World!
 - f. The Jew’s Messiah is also the Gentile’s Hope.
 - g. Abraham’s Seed is your Savior! David’s Son is your King!
 - h. He is sufficient not only for one people, but for every tribe and nation and tongue! He is enough for the Jew. He can heal everyone, like in Gennesaret. And He can satisfy everyone, like in the 5000. He is enough for the Gentile. He can heal everyone, like the mountain beside the Sea of Galilee. He can satisfy everyone, like in the 4000.
 - i. He is the King – and this is His kingdom!