

Devotional—Tour Week 4

"The Miracles"

Matthew 14:14-36 (The Message)

Supper for Five Thousand

14 Soon a lot of people from the nearby villages walked around the lake to where he was. When he saw them coming, he was overcome with pity and healed their sick.

15 Toward evening the disciples approached him. "We're out in the country and it's getting late. Dismiss the people so they can go to the villages and get some supper."

16 But Jesus said, "**There is no need to dismiss them. You give them supper.**"

17 "All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish," they said.

18-21 Jesus said, "**Bring them here.**" Then he had the people sit on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.

Walking on the Water

22-23 As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

24-26 Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

27 But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "**Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid.**"

28 Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

29-30 He said, "**Come ahead.**"

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, **he lost his nerve** and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

31 Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "**Faint-heart, what got into you?**"

32-33 The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!"

34-36 On return, they beached the boat at Gennesaret. When the people got wind that he was back, they sent out word through the neighborhood and rounded up all the sick, who asked for permission to touch the edge of his coat. And whoever touched him was healed.

Time for personal reflection (Tour Week 4):

Though the book of Matthew is full of Jesus' "stories," it is also full of His miracles.

John-Michael Tebelak and the original cast of *Godspell* did not attempt to present this aspect on stage. Why might they have made the decision to leave out the many miracles witnessed by the disciples?

Look at verse 16. Jesus tells his disciples, "**You** give them supper." This command is not about thousands of hungry people. It is not about bread and fish. It is not about solving problems. Jesus' command to the disciples is about them. It is about looking past the problem and seeing the opportunity to love and serve. What directives have I found Jesus giving me during the past 4 weeks? Have I been obeying them or have I been balking and making excuses ("All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish.")?

In verses 18-21, Jesus provides food for the thousands of people waiting to hear Him speak and "the disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers." 12 baskets of leftovers from over 5,000 people—how generous He was! Are there situations in my life in which I act as the disciples did and balk at His ability to provide? Has there ever been a time when He did not more than generously provide my needs (not wants) for me?

In verses 29-30, Jesus walks upon the stormy water and Peter joins Him, but Peter makes the mistake of looking "down at the waves churning beneath his feet" and begins to sink. In response, Jesus asks him "Faint-hearted, what got into you?" How often do I find myself looking too closely at the storm churning beneath my feet than into the eyes of Jesus? How many times could He say of me "Faint-hearted, what got into you?"