

Matthew 13:53-14:36—Responses to the King: Unbelief and Faith

- **Intro:**
 - **Overarching Point: Our response to Jesus is a reflection of our belief about Jesus**
 - The responses from the soils parable evidenced in Jesus experience with people.
 - **Hard soil** = Nazareth And Herod
 - **Rocky Soil (Superficial)** = Crowd (John 6 they stopped following Jesus when it got hard)
 - **Thorny Soil (divided heart)** = Judas (implicit in that he was observing it all)
 - **Good soil** = the disciples worshipping in the boat declaring Jesus the Son of God
- **2 Pictures of Unbelief:**
 - **Nazareth Rejects the King (13:53-58)**
 - **They saw his works and heard his words but denied him worship!**
 - **Familiarity and proximity DOES NOT EQUAL worship!**
 - **Rejection based on jealousy and indifference—Jesus = hometown boy w/ all the praise**
Nazareth a picture of Bible Belt—access to the gospel, the evidence of God all around and yet REJECTION ABOUND.
 - **Warning—you can occupy the right places, know the right lingo, rub shoulders with the right people and REJECT Jesus in your heart!**
 - **Herod Confuses the King (14:1-12)**
 - **Rejection based on FEAR—John and Jesus were a THREAT to Herod's power and reign**
 - **v.1-2—Herod gets scared b/c he thinks Jesus is John resurrected!**
 - **John pronounced a King and Kingdom that threatened Herod's kingdom**
 - **"heard about the fame of Jesus"—every kingdom is threatened by Christ's Kingdom!**
 - **Will we reject our small kingdoms for Christ's or will we reject Christ's Kingdom in order to hang on to our small plots of land?**
 - **John called out Herod's sin (adultery/incest) which threatened his reputation**
 - **"promised to give her whatever she might ask"—when Christ's Kingdom confronts our small kingdoms, pride will drive us to reject redemption no matter the cost!**
 - **v.3-13—a flashback to how John died (beheaded)**
 - **The forerunner of Christ killed for declaring the kingdom and proclaiming righteousness!**
 - **Herod rejects the Messiah and kills the final Old Testament/pre-Jesus Prophet!**
 - **v.3-13—a foreshadowing of the death of Christ**
 - **Herod's unbelief and fear led to the deaths of both John and Jesus!**
 - **Compare Herod and John—Looks a lot like Jesus and Herod in passion week.**
 - **John**—righteous, outspoken, courageous
 - **Herod**—wicked, sly/passive, cowardly
 - **Herod confused Jesus and saw him as a threat come to steal something from him rather than a Savior come to give him all he could ever desire! Pride/fear blinded him!**
 - **Spurgeon—How low was our dear Redeemer brought! How then can we be proud? Stand at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed; see the thorn-crown; mark his scourged shoulders, still gushing with encrimsoned rills; see hands and feet given up to the rough iron, and his whole self to mockery and scorn; see the bitterness, and the pangs, and the throes of inward grief, showing themselves in his outward frame; hear the thrilling shriek, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And if you do not lie iprostrate on the ground before that cross, you have never seen it: if you are not humbled in the presence of Jesus, you do not know him. You were so lost that nothing could save you but the sacrifice of God's only begotten. Think of that, and as Jesus stooped for you, bow yourself in lowliness at his feet. A sense of Christ's amazing love to us has a greater tendency to humble us than even a consciousness of our own guilt. May the Lord bring us in contemplation to Calvary, then our position will no longer be that of the pompous man of pride, but we shall take the humble place of one who loves much because much has been forgiven him. Pride cannot live beneath the cross.**

- 2 Pictures of Faith:
 - Faith in the King in the Face of Need (14:13-21)
 - Crowd's Problem—faith is superficial. They abandon Jesus (Jn 6:22-71) when it gets hard
 - Jesus is full of compassion and we ought to reflect it
 - “he had compassion on them and healed their sick”
 - “send the crowds away...”—Jesus doesn't cast them off but draws them in to a meal... a foretaste of the new Kingdom community and the Wedding Feast.
 - Most people with power and prestige DON'T CARE about people—Jesus is opposite!
 - Jesus is full of resources, we ought to depend upon them
 - “you give them something to eat”—Jesus intentionally involves the disciples!
 - Emphasis on YOU—invites them in yet reminds them they're hopeless on their own.
 - Are you working and toiling in your own flesh and resources to do what only Jesus is capable of doing? Will you take what you have and put it in Jesus' hands and watch him work?
 - Moses had a staff—he allowed God to use it
 - David had a sling—he allowed God to use it
 - Gideon had torches and trumpets—he allowed God to use it
 - Jesus alone is sufficient but he has chosen to work through the means of his people!
 - Beautiful truths:
 - Are you in the Crowd—Jesus meets the needs IN us (he is faithful to finish his work)
 - Are you a Disciple—Jesus meets needs THROUGH us (he is gracious to include us)
 - Faith in the King in the Face of Fear (14:22-33)
 - “dismissed the crowds”—Luke says he, “fled to the hills”—the crowds are trying to force Jesus to assume a political throne immediately!
 - “it is I”—rendering of the same Hebrew name used by YHWH to Moses, “I am”
 - Jesus connecting himself, who has power over the sea, to the God who made the sea!
 - “Oh you of little faith”—throughout Matthew, “little faith” is not inadequate faith but NON-FAITH...unbelief! In this moment, Peter was ACTING in unbelief regardless of his words!
 - Danger—our mouths can profess FAITH while our lives DENY it.
 - Little faith—Peter's problem wasn't the SIZE of his faith but the OBJECT of his faith.
 - Peter was more impacted by presence of the waves than power of Jesus to hold him!
 - Gospel faith is not, “I'll tightly hold on to Jesus.”—YOU WON'T AND; NOT STRONG
 - Gospel faith = recognizing our utter hopelessness and throwing ourselves in full dependence and hope and confidence on Christ alone!
 - These chapters represent the disciples early journey to walk in faith and trust of Jesus.
 - Ever find it hard to walk by faith? To trust God with all the circumstances of life?
 - What is faith? It is not merely believing that Jesus is God and that he died to save us. Faith is actually banking our lives and our joy and our salvation and our security on him!
 - “if it is you”—literally, “since it is you.”—Peter believed it was Jesus, he knew Jesus had the power to keep him up, but he quit banking his actual life on those beliefs.
 - Peter showed more faith in crying out as he sank than as he walked on water!!
 - “Jesus reached out”—Peter's fault was not in proposing to walk out to Jesus but in losing confidence in Jesus' ability to sustain him! External variables are irrelevant in the presence of a transcendent Christ!
 - Amazing grace—his faithless disciple fails, takes his affections and confidence off of his Savior.
 - Jesus doesn't LOOK down and SCOLD him but REACHES down to SAVE him.
 - “worshipped...truly you are the Son of God”—the disciples are led into true worship.
 - This worship is tied to their confession, “Truly you are the son of God”
 - Once they rightly understood who Jesus was, their worship was rightly reoriented.
 - Problem—among these disciples is Judas who, though he saw all these miracles, still rejected Jesus (divided heart)