

Text: Matthew 14:13-17:27

Section 1

13Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. 15When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!" 17They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 18And He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, 20and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. 21There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children. (Matthew 14:13-21)

34When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. 35And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; 36and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured. (Matthew 14:34-36)

29Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. 30And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. 31So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. 32And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." 33The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" 34And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." 35And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; 36and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 37And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. 38And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan. (Matthew 15:29-39)

As I have stated many times during our study of Matthew, Jesus' ability to heal is one of the marks of His office as Messiah, and He demonstrated that ability in these passages, as well. Isaiah 53:4, which we read earlier, is one prophetic passage that indicates the healing power of Messiah. I would like to further reference the Book of Isaiah to show that Jesus used the two "feedings" to demonstrate His power even more dramatically.

**6For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**

Isaiah prophesied that the coming Messiah would be none other than God Himself, born in human flesh. John also spoke about Jesus being God:

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (John 1:1-3)

All things came into being through Him. Isaiah said Jesus would be God; John said that Jesus was indeed God, the creator of the universe. How did God create the universe? (He spoke it into existence—see Genesis 1.) With what did He create the universe? (Nothing.) These "feedings" were nothing less than creation *ex nihilo*—creation "out of nothing," just as He did when creating the universe. Jesus here demonstrated a power belonging only to God.

Before leaving these passages, let me also note that Jesus, besides demonstrating His being Messiah and God, also followed a principle here that we are to remember: do not attempt to preach the Gospel to those that have physical or other needs until you meet those needs. A hungry man doesn't know he needs a Bible—he only knows He needs food. The man on the side of the road asking for food or money or work will likely not want to sit and pray with you. Your server at the restaurant making \$2 an hour plus tips will not take well to a Gospel tract being given in lieu of a tip (though they can be left along with a generous tip).

14What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (James 2:14-17)

Section 2

22Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. 23After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. 24But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. 25And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. 26When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." 28Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!" (Matthew 14:22-33)

Jesus demonstrated power not only to create, but to act contrary to physical laws when it suited His purposes to do so. The disciples acknowledged this as a demonstration of His deity when they said *You are certainly God's Son!*

Jesus granted power unto His followers to perform miraculous acts in proportion to their faith *in Him*. When Peter stepped out of the boat in faith he was enabled to walk on water; when he lost focus on Jesus and focused on the wind instead, he sank. Likewise, if we have even a small, but firm faith *in Him* (and the Object of faith is important—we don't just have "faith in faith") we will be able to do great things for His Kingdom. (Note: Faith in Him will not enable us to act not in accordance with His will, and especially not in a sinful manner!)

18And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. 19Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" 20And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. (Matthew 17:18-20)

13I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

14This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

Section 3

21Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." 23But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." 24But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once. (Matthew 15:21-28)

Please don't think Jesus was being cruel here. Granted, He was under no obligation to help this woman—remember, none of us deserves anything from God but an eternity in Hell! And, He was correct in saying that the Gospel was offered to the Jews before it was offered to the rest of us.

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

However, Jesus' primary purpose in speaking so harshly to the woman appears to have been to test her faith, and to demonstrate it to us. Her faith, one that was not proud or demanding, is the type that we must have. We come to Him, recognizing that we have virtually no standing before God, but trusting that He will grant mercy unto those that ask. Although I have referred to it often, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is relevant:

9And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: **10**"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**"The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12**'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' **13**"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14**"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

Section 4

*1*The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. *2*But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' *3*"And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? *4*"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away. *5*And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. *6*And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." *7*They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread." *8*But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? *9*"Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? *10*"Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? *11*"How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." *12*Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:1-12)

Jesus mentioned the *sign of Jonah* previously, and expounded upon it. This sign was none other than Jesus being dead and buried, and rising again on the third day.

39But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; **40**for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:39-40)

The Pharisees and Sadducees were experts in the Old Testament, yet they were so blinded by their traditions and self-righteousness that they failed to see the Fulfillment of the Law right before their eyes. Jesus warned His followers to beware of their teachings, and to stay away from them.

This is a fine admonition even for us today. I don't think most Christians are in danger of following the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but we must always be on the lookout for false teachers, which the Bible warns are among us, and will increase in number and popularity as we near the end.

28"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **29**"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30**and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. **31**"Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. **32**"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:28-32)

3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, **4**and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Like the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, many of today's false teachings pervert Christianity into a religion of doing for ourselves, rather than one in which Christ paid the penalty for our sins, and even grants us the faith we exercise to be saved. Whether it's Joel Osteen's heretical self-help message, or the works gospel of the Jehovah's Witnesses, human perversions of Christianity refuse to admit that we are broken and helpless apart from God's grace. No amount of good works or service to God will save—only faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord will save, and that is the Good News!

8For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; **9**not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Section 5

*13*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" *14*And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." *15*He said to

them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." 20Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. (Matthew 16:13-20)

Jesus asked the disciples who people said He was, and then who the disciples thought He was. Peter correctly identified Him as the Christ, and the Son of God. We have already discussed the prophecy in which Christ was identified as God Himself.

**6For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**

Jesus called Peter blessed, and promised to build His church upon this confession, upon this truth—NOT upon Peter as an individual, as the Roman Catholic Church would have us to believe. The only Rock upon which our faith rests is Christ Himself, the Cornerstone as foretold in Isaiah 28:

**16Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,
"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone,
A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.
He who believes in it will not be disturbed. (Isaiah 28:16)**

Jesus states that this knowledge came to Peter not by his own intuition or intelligence, but because it was revealed to him by the Father. This is true of all spiritual knowledge. We are called upon to study, we are called upon to pray, and we are called upon to proclaim the Word, but understanding comes only as God chooses to reveal it. We should therefore be grateful to Him for the extent to which He allows us to understand Him through His revealed Word.

14But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

25At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. 26"Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. 27"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Matthew 11:25-27)

Section 6

21From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." 23But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (Matthew 16:21-23)

22And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; 23and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved. (Matthew 17:22-23)

Some "rock" Peter turned out to be. As soon as he became aware that Christ's intentions were incongruent with his own concept of Messiah, Peter took it upon himself to rebuke God! Peter no doubt had good intentions—some would even argue that Judas had good intentions! But, good intentions do not create righteousness. Righteousness is obeying the Word of God. In this case, the same Bible that identified Christ as God also indicated the type of death He was to die.

**1My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.
2O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;
And by night, but I have no rest.
3Yet You are holy,
O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
4In You our fathers trusted;
They trusted and You delivered them.
5To You they cried out and were delivered;**

In You they trusted and were not disappointed.
6But I am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men and despised by the people.
7All who see me sneer at me;
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,
8"Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him;
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."
9Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;
You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts.
10Upon You I was cast from birth;
You have been my God from my mother's womb.
11Be not far from me, for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.
12Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.
13They open wide their mouth at me,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
14I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
15My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
16For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
17I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;
18They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots. (Psalm 22:1-18)

When we set out to do anything in ministry we must return to the Word and study to see if our plans are in keeping with God's commands. Otherwise, good intentions, "warm fuzzies," and even "spiritual experiences" can lead to actions, teachings, and even beliefs that are disobedient, dangerous, and even heretical.

6I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Galatians 1:6-9)

Section 7

24Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. 28"Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matthew 16:21-28)

Jesus said to deny self and follow Him. Not only did He command this, He set the example for us to follow!

5Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

We are to follow Him, knowing that eternal life is the reward. *Every* knee will bow to Christ. If we will bow in this life, we will be rewarded. If we defy Him in this life, we will still bow in the next—and then be cast into eternal torment. Don't fear Satan, or his

many (mostly unaware) followers. Satan only seeks for you to share his fate! Fear God, love God, obey God, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and be saved!

28"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

Some folks have a problem with the last verse of this chapter—all these men have died, and yet the second coming has not yet occurred. No, Christ has not yet returned to the earth, but He does already reign over all creation, seated at the Father's right hand:

32"Thus Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

34"For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

"THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

35UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" 36"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:32-36)

My belief is that the last verse of chapter 16 is fulfilled in chapter 17, when Peter, James, and John saw a brief glimpse of Christ in His heavenly glory.

Section 8

1Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" 6When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. 7And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." 8And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. 9As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." 10And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 11And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; 12but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." 13Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:1-13)

Peter, James, and John had the privilege of seeing Jesus in His glory as the Lord and King of all creation. Then, they were enveloped by a cloud. This is likely none other than the *Shekinah* glory of God, that which guided the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness, and which filled the Temple when Solomon dedicated it to the Lord's service. This served as a further confirmation of Jesus' person and office.

34Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; 37but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. 38For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel. (Exodus 40:34-38)

1Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house. (2 Chronicles 7:1-2)

Next, the disciples asked about the coming of Elijah. As we discussed when studying Matthew 11, John the Baptist fulfilled this role, serving as the forerunner of Christ as prophesied by the prophet Malachi. Jesus used this as an opportunity to reiterate that He also would die at the hands of wicked men.

1"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

5"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. (Malachi 4:5)

Section 9

14When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, 15"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16"I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." 17And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." 18And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. 19Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" 20And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. 21["But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."] (Matthew 17:14-21)

It is impossible to do God's work without faith. We must have not faith "in faith," but in the Person and Power of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through Him that we can do anything in His service, and for His Kingdom.

4"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

6And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

13I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Section 10

24When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?" 25He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?" 26When Peter said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are exempt. 27"However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me." (Matthew 17:24-27)

Jesus appears to have viewed this tax as another regulation imposed upon the people on top of God's commands in the Law. While He regarded this tax as unnecessary because it was not commanded, He also saw no harm in paying it, since no command in the Law was subverted by it, as was the case with some of the minutia observed by the scribes and Pharisees. Because there was no harm in paying the tax, Jesus elected not to make an issue of it, but to pay the tax. Paul taught a similar concept. We should do as much as we can to show ourselves like unto those to whom we desire to witness, short of committing any sin in the process.

19For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. 20To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 22To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. 23I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Jesus and Peter were quite poor, and the two-drachma tax may very well have been beyond their means to pay. Still, God provided for them. Likewise, Christ's followers can expect to have their needs met at all times. We may not always have an abundance, but we will never want.

19And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)