

Title: Matthew 14-16

Session 13

Author: Dr. Craig Keener,

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Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Craig Keener explores the christological and discipleship themes within Matthew 14–16, illustrating how Jesus reveals his divine identity through miracles like walking on water. Keener highlights a crucial shift in the narrative where Jesus prioritizes the internal, transcultural principles of Scripture over human traditions and ritual purity, eventually extending his mission to include Gentile faith. The lecture culminates in Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, establishing the church's foundation on the proclamation of Christ's identity despite the looming reality of the cross. Ultimately, Keener emphasizes that true followers must embrace a theology of suffering, trading worldly security for the eternal value of the kingdom.

Outline

I. Jesus Walks on the Water (Matthew 14)

- **A. Narrative of walking on the water:** Explores the dawn setting and the disciples' initial failure to recognize Jesus on the lake.
- **B. Christology: Revelation of divine identity:**
 1. *Ego eimi* ("I am" / "It is I") used as a divine Old Testament name.
 2. Parallel to Yahweh treading on the sea as depicted in Job 9:8.
- **C. Discipleship: Peter's step of faith and failure:**
 1. Peter requests Jesus to bid him walk, recognizing miracles can only occur at the Lord's bidding.
 2. Peter sinks due to fear of the wind and waves, demonstrating "little faith".
 3. Cry of desperation: "Lord, save me".

4. Modern-day missionary parallels in crossing high waters by faith.

II. Scripture Over Human Tradition (Matthew 15)

- **A. Controversy over hand washing and ritual purity:**
 1. Pharisees' meticulousness with human traditions over hygiene.
 2. Jesus' counter-challenge: Accusing religious leaders of ignoring the principles of Scripture to uphold their custom.
- **B. Exploiting religious loopholes:**
 1. Dedicating money to the sanctuary (temple) to avoid supporting aging parents.
 2. True biblical stewardship and meeting real human needs vs. hollow religious devotion.
- **C. Transcultural principles of Scripture vs. temporary cultural details:**
 1. The case of Deuteronomy 22: Building a safety parapet or fence around flat roofs to prevent blood guilt and accidents.
 2. Identifying transcultural safety protocols as a form of loving your neighbor.
- **D. Blind guides of the blind:** Pharisees portrayed as spiritually blind guides leading followers into open pits.

III. Gentile Faith Challenged and Commended (Matthew 15)

- **A. Canaanite woman:** Acknowledged in Matthew by her ancient ancestral designation to mirror genealogies like Tamar and Rahab.
- **B. The obstacle of the "dog" comparison:** Jesus presents a cultural obstacle to test and refine her faith.
- **C. Her persistence:** Demonstrates "holy chutzpah" by asking for only a crumb of Jesus' immense power.
- **D. Commendation:** Her faith is rewarded, mirroring the Roman Centurion's faith and pointing toward a global mission.

IV. The Feeding of the Four Thousand and Demand for Signs (Matthew 15-16)

- **A. Miraculous multiplication of bread:** Feeding of the 4,000 men (excluding women and children by ancient counting customs) leaving seven baskets of leftovers.
- **B. Demand for signs:**
 1. Pharisees and Sadducees demand a heavenly sign despite signs already given.
 2. Jesus rebukes them for predicting weather based on the sky while being blind to the signs of the times.
 3. Jesus warns against the "yeast" or teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

V. Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16)

- **A. Pagan setting:** Caesarea Philippi, a pagan city associated with witchcraft and the worship of Pan.
- **B. The question of identity:** "Who do people say I am?" leading to "Whom do you say I am?"
- **C. The confession:** Peter declares Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of the living God".
- **D. The "Messianic Secret":** Jesus instructs silence to prevent premature confrontation and because his identity cannot be fully understood apart from the cross.
- **E. Peter as the Rock (*Kepha*):**
 1. Peter's role as the proclaimer of Jesus' identity serves as the foundation of the church, echoing the apostolic foundation in Ephesians 2:20.
- **F. *Ekklesia* (Church) as the covenant community:**
 1. Meaning of *Ekklesia* as public, covenant assemblies.
 2. Gates of Hades (the realm of death/martyrdom) will not prevail against it.
- **G. Keys of the Kingdom:** Symbol of high official authority within the house of David.

VI. The Cost of Discipleship and Suffering (Matthew 16)

- **A. Peter's rebuke and Jesus' sharp response:**

1. Jesus addresses Peter as "Satan" for opposing the necessity of the cross.
 2. Exposing the satanic nature of seeking a kingdom without a cross.
- **B. Cost of following Jesus:**
 1. Disciples must "take up their cross" and follow.
 2. To save one's life eternally, one must be willing to lose it in this present life.
 3. Living every moment in light of eternity, recognizing what lasts forever is what counts.
 - **C. Foretaste of glory:** Jesus promises that some will see the Son of Man coming, which is immediately fulfilled in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17).