

Christ Church, New Haven
Sunday Forum: The Gospel According to St. Matthew
October 22, 2023: Matthew 14-18—The Community Discourse

Questions for Reflection

Consider the relationship between faith and doubt in Matthew 14:28-33 (Jesus and Peter on the water). What does doubt look and feel like for you? If you have had periods of doubt in your faith life, how have you moved through and beyond them?

Matthew 16:15: “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’” Who do you say Jesus is?

Peter’s answer to Jesus’s question in Matthew 16:15 has immediate implications. What are the implications for your understanding of who Jesus is? How does your understanding of Jesus translate into an invitation to action?

In Matthew 18:1-7 and 10-14, Jesus instructs his disciples about children. How do we include children in our common life of the church? What are other ways we might be welcoming to or encouraging of children?

Have you ever given up something that caused you to “stumble” (Matthew 18:8-9)? How might you recognize that you are stumbling, and how might you identify the stumbling block?

How have you approached disagreement or conflict with other Christians in the past? Does Christ’s teaching in Matthew 18:15-22 apply to relationships between church members and non-members?

Notes for Matthew 14-18

- 14** **The death of John the Baptist:** compare to Mark 6:14-29. Note the chronology in vv. 1-2 and 12-13. **Herod the ruler** is Herod Antipas, the successor of Herod the Great (Matthew 2).
- 14:14-21** **Feeding of the crowds:** compare to Matthew 15:32-38.
- 14:24** **“battered by the waves”:** the Greek word translated as “battered,” βασιανίζω (*basanizō*), more literally means “tortured” or “tormented”
- 14:25** **“early in the morning”:** Gk. “in the fourth watch of the night” (3:00-6:00 a.m.). Compare Exodus 14:24, Psalm 46:5, Isaiah 17:14.
- 14:27** **“It is I; do not be afraid”:** Greek ἐγώ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε (*ego eimi, mē phobeisthe*), “I am; be not afraid”
- 14:33** **“Truly you are the Son of God”:** the first confession of Jesus as God’s Son.
- 15:21-28** **The Canaanite woman:** compare to the Syro-phoenician woman in Mark 7:24-30.
- 16:16** The second confession of Jesus as God’s Son.
- 18** **The Community Discourse:** the fourth of the five major speeches in Matthew.
- 18:8-9** In Socratic philosophy, amputation is used as a metaphor for dismissing unreasonable or illogical thoughts (“separation from unreason”). In some Hellenistic texts, amputation is used as a metaphor for separation from bad friends or relations (i.e., avoiding bad influences).