

Mental

Participating In a Miracle

MATTHEW 14:13-21

SESSION 6.31



Prepare in Advance

Facilitator: In advance of the session:

- Retrieve, review, and have ready the video's listed below (links are provided on this session's webpage).
- Prepare a focal point in the room that includes newspaper and magazine articles of different difficult world situations, family situations, community situations, etc.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.

Introduction

Introduce today's session by first asking: Have you ever observed a miracle? Have you ever participated in a miracle? Explain.

Have someone read Matthew 14:13-21 out loud and show the *Bible Background Video*. Use the following questions to encourage discussion.

A Familiar Story

- Have you heard this story before? Were there any details that surprised you? Was something missing, or something you didn't expect? (reminder – this story is told slightly differently in each of the four Gospels).
- How did this day start – what did Jesus intend to do? What happened instead? Why do you think Jesus changed his plans?
- Discuss the disciples' idea (v. 15) and their response to Jesus' instructions (v. 16-18). Are they showing a lack of faith, or simply being practical?
- Describe Jesus' actions. At the time it probably did not seem spectacular... just a gradual realization that there was more food than there should be. How could Jesus have done this as more of a spectacle... and why do you think he didn't?
- Verse 20 says there were 12 baskets left over. What is symbolic about this number, and how does that symbolism apply to this story?

Part of a Miracle

- According to this and other versions of the story, several people were participants in this miracle – at

least the disciples, and the boy who gave his lunch. Why do you think Jesus wanted them to be part of the miraculous things that would happen?

- Go back to the opening question: What miracles have you observed? Recall things, too, that often don't seem "spectacular" to us – gradual healings, changes of heart and spirit, someone coming to faith in Christ.
- How have you been a participant in miracles like that? How did it make you feel to be a part?
- Why do you think God chooses to work through us to accomplish things in the world?
- Do these kinds of miracles have to happen by accident? How might we sometimes "plan" for a miracle?

Close with prayer.

By Jon Parks

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