

Matthew 14:1-13

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[0:00] Matthew, Matthew chapter 14. Matthew chapter 14 is where we will be at this morning. Matthew 14 verses 1 through 12. We'll get into the 13th verse just a little bit.

So Matthew 14 verses 1 through 13. The 13th verse there is a transition into the next part of that chapter, which we will not get into, but it's good to take it into context this morning with our text. But it is good to be gathered together with you and so thankful to have the opportunity to worship. In reality, that we have a Savior who comes to us in our brokenness and comes to us in our uncleanness.

And as Scripture says, while we were yet sinners, He died for us. Very rarely will a friend die for a good man, and even rarer still will a great man die for the baddest of men.

And that's where we find the perfect man, Jesus, dying for sinful mankind. And we see the great price painted throughout Scripture. And we'll begin to see a little bit of that impact this morning in our section of Matthew.

[1:02] If you've been with us in the Gospel of Matthew, we've been looking at the reality that Jesus Christ is King of Kings. Matthew is writing to his own people, that is, the Jewish people. This is Levi, the tax collector, also known as Matthew, who writes to his own people the reality of who Jesus Christ is.

He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the long-anticipated Messiah and the long-awaited King that the nation of Israel had been looking for. We see it throughout Old Testament teaching. And we are just filled with the anticipation and the hope, even in the last pages of the Old Testament. As we have it, that would be the book of Malachi, when it speaks of one that is coming. And even the book of Malachi speaks of a forerunner who goes before him to prepare the hearts and the minds of men, to turn the hearts of the children back to the hearts of their fathers, and to prepare a way for the one that is to come.

Now, that's how the English Bible ends. The Jewish Bible ends. The Jewish Old Testament ends with the book of 2 Chronicles. And the last verse in the book of 2 Chronicles is the issuing of a decree of King Cyrus to go and rebuild Jerusalem.

[2:06] Now, while historically there was a time when Jerusalem was rebuilt and a number of people went back, the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, you know that, you say, man, pastor hit it running. I did. Stay with me. The book of Ezra and Nehemiah, we have that in the Old Testament.

You read those two together. Because Ezra is the political leader, Nehemiah, I mean, Ezra is the spiritual leader, Nehemiah is the political leader. Ezra comes and he is a scribe who teaches people the word.

Nehemiah comes and leads the people to work, right? There's the word and the work. By the way, that shouldn't surprise you. Those two always go hand in hand. As the scripture says that a man that does not work shall not eat, right?

Through the word and work are always joined together. There's nothing wrong with that. But anyway, so we see that in Ezra and Nehemiah. And they come back. But do you remember they come back because of the issue of the King Cyrus, 2 Chronicles, the last verse, that whosoever will let him go back, do you remember that it was only a small remnant that returned?

Very, very small remnant that actually came back to inhabit the land of Israel, the promised land where God is calling them out of what would be Babylonian captivity. Only a small minority of the Jewish people came back.

[3:17] We should be thankful for this. You say, what does this have to do with Matthew? Stay with me. We should be thankful for this because this led to the dispersion of the Jewish people around the world, their kingdom, the Roman Empire later on, and led to the Greek translation and the Septuagint.

Anyway, it led to scholars and scribes and people that would teach it. Some think that Ezra is probably the leading scribe and started this scribal tradition of passing on Scripture to those who didn't grow up around it.

That eventually came down to the Gentile people as well. But anyway, the English Old Testament ends with the reality or what you have in your hands, the book of Malachi, one coming to prepare the way.

The Jewish Old Testament ends with whoever wants to let him go back and rebuild, right? The issue of the king to rebuild the city. That has never really been done.

Both of those anticipate the coming of a king, a true king. It is anticipation that a king that will lead his people forth all throughout the Old Testament, the prophetic works, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, all of those speak of a king that would arise, that would bring his people back.

[4 : 28] Matthew introduces us to that man. He is Jesus. He is the king of kings and Lord of lords. He is the one who is over all. And he takes the first few chapters in the book of Matthew and he validates the king.

Not only do we see his teaching to the political leaders, or not the political leaders, the religious leaders, those inside the synagogue, and he is discussing the things of the word and they are perplexed and confused and they don't understand how this young boy of age 12 can know so much and they don't understand how later on this man who is the son of a carpenter could understand so much and he confounds the religious leaders, but he validates what he is saying based upon his miraculous deeds.

We would call those miracles, right? Understand these wondrous works are always testimonial signs to validate what he has been saying. So don't separate his work from his word.

Pretty consistent theme, right? Don't separate his work from his word because his works are always to validate what he has been saying. He is the king. And then it comes time in the gospel of Matthew where he says, now it's time to make a decision.

If I am who I say I am and I have validated and proved it, then follow me, commit to me, trust me. He calls his apostles, his disciples to himself.

[5 : 48] Twelve he appoints them. But we read here in the 14th chapter something that is very unexpected because if you remember I said chapter 13 in the gospel of Matthew is a hinge chapter.

Remember that? The door is swinging. We're no longer speaking of Jesus validating himself or at least demonstrating that he is who he says he is to the religious leaders in the synagogue.

Now he moves to the common man. There's more open air teaching and preaching through the rest of the book of Matthew. Sure, he will still go back to the synagogue but most of the time it focuses on the crowd.

Even in this own chapter, Matthew 14, there's the feeding of the 5,000. 5,000 men. Probably somewhere upwards of around 10,000 individuals.

But we also have said not only is he moving to the crowds, he's moving to his cross. Because from this point on, in correlation with every other gospel, Jesus' face is set towards Jerusalem.

[6 : 49] Matthew 13 ends with Jesus' last appearance in his hometown of Nazareth. And he is rejected. And he makes this comment that a prophet is not without honor except for in his own hometown.

And he could do no miraculous deeds there or he chose not to do any miraculous deeds there because of their unbelief or lack of faith. And so now he's setting his face towards Jerusalem.

Ultimately, in Jerusalem, he will pay the ultimate price of man. He will die on the cross of Calvary for our sins. But he makes this startling assessment of man's condition, of man following and committing to him.

I have told you in reading the Gospels, there is this thing that we need to pay attention to when Scripture repeats itself, when Scripture repeats itself, and how we should pay special and close.

If God says something once, he means it and that settles it. If God says it twice, then we really need to pay a little bit more attention to it. If God says it, you know, three times, then maybe we should really stop and pause and consider ourselves like, okay, the Father is telling us again.

[8 : 03] If Jesus himself says something five times, then maybe we should say, why is that so important? The most often repeated phrase of Jesus is this.

He who does not follow me and take up his cross and follow after me cannot be my disciple. Jesus' call to those who will commit to him is a reminder, and here's your title, of the high cost of

faithfulness.

Because he is who he says he is and he calls us to commit our all to him. He reminds us of the high cost of faithfulness. It is not an easy road in the world in which we live, and we will see that reality in Matthew 14, verses 1 through 13.

If you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God. About that time.

Now this is the time when Christ has been teaching. This is the time connected to the 13th chapter when Jesus could do no works in Nazareth.

[9 : 19] About that time, Herod, I hate to keep interrupting, this is not Herod the Great, this is Herod the Great's son, Herod Antipas. There's like so many Herods in scripture, we get confused. But this is Herod Antipas, okay?

About that time, Herod the Tetrarch heard the news about Jesus. And said to his servants, This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him. For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, It is not lawful for you to have her. Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd because they regarded John as a prophet.

But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, she said, Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist. Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

[10 : 26] His disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and they went and reported to Jesus. Now 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. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for every opportunity you give us of gathering together. We thank you for the great privilege it is of opening up your word. And Lord, we pray now as we have read it that your word would open up our hearts and minds. That we would come to a greater understanding, O Lord, not only of who you are, but who you have called us to be in light of who you are.

Lord, that you would use it to penetrate to the very depth of our being. That it would call us to a greater commitment. That it would call us to a greater faithfulness. Lord, have your perfect way in this place, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. We read here the account of the death of John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the forerunner who would go before him, spoken of in the book of Malachi and also in the book of Isaiah.

[11 : 36] He is the one that is said to make a way in the wilderness, to pave the road, if you will, for the coming of the Savior. John the Baptist is the most unlikely of children because he was born to a couple who should not have had him.

Zacharias and Elizabeth, if you remember, Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, and after over 400 years of silence, God broke the silence with an announcement from the angel Gabriel that Zacharias' wife would bear a child.

Now, Zacharias doubts this announcement, and he is at least rebuked for his doubt of this announcement because he said, how can this be? Now, this gives wisdom to us men because Zacharias says, and if you remember the text in Scripture is always right, and this gives wisdom to men, Zacharias says, for I am old and my wife is advancing.

He doesn't call his wife old. He says, I'm old and my wife is advanced in years. So never is she old, she's just advancing. And Zacharias says, I don't know how this could ever happen.

And Gabriel says, I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of the Lord God Almighty, and will you doubt me? And he said, you shall be silent, not be able to say anything. Remember, he couldn't speak until John was born. We kind of question that a little bit because we also see Mary doing the same thing, asking how can this be?

[12 : 53] But the reason Zacharias is so rebuked is because he heard that while burning incense in the tabernacle, in the temple. And the incense was to be a demonstration of the prayers of God's

people ascending to the throne room of heaven and God hearing the prayers of his people.

And if you remember that when God broke the silence, he said, your prayers have been heard. And Zacharias says, I don't believe it. Now that's hypocrisy at its worst.

It's the same thing we see that when Peter is arrested and the church gathers together in the book of Acts and they're praying for Peter. And then Peter knocks on the door and a servant girl sees Peter at the door and goes in and tells the church that is gathered for the express purpose of praying for Peter's release and says Peter is at the door and the church says it can't be.

You're wrong. Even though we're asking for it, we don't really expect it. And God rebukes that, right? But Zacharias was rebuked and the son was born.

And when Zacharias is finally able to speak, he offers this great song that's recorded in the early pages of Matthew. And it speaks of the place and the prominence that his son would hold.

[14:01] He would be a forerunner who would go before him. John the Baptist is a very obscure figure. He lives in the wilderness. He's a strange man. He has a strange diet. And we have said it more times than not that if he came into most of our churches, he would be asked to leave every one of them.

He called the helpless. He spoke to the needy. He ministered to the outcasts and he rebuked the religious. He called them a brood of vipers. But he was used of God, but he was used for a very short time.

While Jesus had only about a three and a half year ministry, the ministry of John the Baptist was probably somewhere around six months. And here we read of his death.

And it comes immediately following the reality that Christ is sending his face to Jerusalem and Christ is calling his people to follow him. It comes right before the demonstration we were to continue reading that when the people followed him from the cities, we see him feeding the 5,000. After the feeding of the 5,000, he sends his disciples out on a boat. And when he sends them out on a boat, they end up in a sea that they thought they were going to die in, right? Because sometimes Jesus sends us straight into the middle of a storm.

[15:09] He doesn't always send us on calm seas. Sometimes he sends us in the middle of the worst of times. And yet right here in the middle of all that is this passage that seems to just kind of leap upon us and we say, why is it here?

Why do we read about this here? John himself said that Jesus must increase and I must decrease. And we would love it if John would just kind of fade into the black light and would go away.

And he seems to do that for a time. And then all of a sudden we see him in prison. And then all of a sudden we see him fading away again. And then all of a sudden we see him being beheaded. And it's really one of the most disturbing stories because his head is brought on a platter and handed to a young lady.

And we're really just kind of left wondering why. But the reason it is here is to remind us and to remind the readers of the book of Matthew of this high cost of faithfulness.

Now I'm thankful for the song that Miss Tricia sang and spoke of our brokenness because John the Baptist himself doubted. Remember that? While he was in prison, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, are you the expected one or do we look for another?

[16:16] Because see, when he was baptizing in the Jordan River and he saw Jesus come and the Spirit of the Lord descending upon him like a dove, he knew he was. But when he was in the depth of the dungeon, he wondered. And the wondering is never a problem.

It's just who we take our doubts to that is the problem. He took his doubts right to the source and took it to the Savior. And the Savior told him what he saw coming. But in John, we see the high cost of faithfulness.

Because once that was settled and the doubt was cast aside, he continued to remain faithful. And we see it here. We see this high cost being played out in four ways. And I promise I won't keep you too long, but stay with me on this because I know my introduction was long.

We see the singular representation that must be maintained as a result of faithfulness. It says, at that time, now every time I read that in Scripture, I stop and pay attention because at that time, friend, do you understand that the kingdom of heaven operates in perfect timing?

Every instance and every moment and every testimony through the life of Christ and the happenings of the church, and when the authors are writing, you say, well, that was just transitional writing.

[17 : 32] No, they were men of God moved by the Spirit of God to write the Word of God. And this is why we pay attention to this. There's always this phrase that at that time, that appointed time, the time when it should have taken place, the time when the kingdom of heaven knew it was going to take place.

We see this greatest in the Gospel of John because Jesus time and time and time again, they try to kill him, but it says that they could not because it was not yet time. It was not yet time where it was not yet the hour.

And then it comes down to John chapter 13. It says, and when the fullness of time had come, Satan entered Judas Iscariot, and Jesus says, what you do, do quickly. That he could not be handed over until it was time.

But at that time, the right time, the proper time, the time which the kingdom of heaven knew full well of, this dark day in humanity, this dark day among John's, the Baptist disciples, this dark day that would have shaken, or shaken is the right word there, Billy Joe, people to their core came at the right time.

At that time when Herod heard, Herod the Tetrarch, Tetrarch means he was ruler over the fourth part of the kingdom. He was just one of four rulers. He heard about everything that Jesus was doing, the miraculous powers, and he says, and surely this is John the Baptist.

[18 : 56] Now do not let that kind of wording there obscure the fact, because we also read of this in the Gospel of Luke, and we read it in the very quick account, but we read of it really in length of Mark chapter 6.

You need to cross-reference this reading in Matthew 14 with Mark chapter 6, because that's where we begin to get the fullness of the story, because the best interpreter of Scripture is, Scripture, right?

And so we see this account, and each of these say the same thing. When Herod heard what Jesus was doing, he thought it was John. Mark tells us that Herod and the people who heard of it thought it was John.

Now that seems kind of strange to us, but here we see the reality that even though John was the forerunner going before the Savior, John was a little bit more popular among the multitudes at this time than Jesus was, but yet there was some confusion as, is this John or is this someone else? Because, see, in reality, in the kingdom, the focus ought to be so singular that we should all be pointing in one direction. Both Jesus and John were representing the same thing.

[20 : 06] So much so that there was some confusion of is this another or is John come back from the life and doing the same thing. Jesus himself says that when I go, you would do the works that I do.

Our representation should be so singular that when people see the work of us, they should confuse it with the work of Christ. That the kingdom operates on the reality that where the kingdom is present, it's always doing the same thing the same way.

That when the saints gather to worship, they're all worship in the same one. That when the saints gather to work, they're all working and laboring for the same cause. That when the people are ministering and helping and meeting the needs, they're all doing it for the same purpose.

There is a singular representation of but one. And that one is the king. I myself have been present when worship was going on in a foreign language.

I could not understand by the ear or by the mind anything that was being said but I could tell in the presence that their worship and my worship was the same.

[21 : 20] I think I've told you that the account, one of the one of the greatest accounts because I've heard it in Spanish, I've heard it in English, I've heard it, but one of the greatest accounts was where my family and I were at a Southern Baptist convention.

I want to think that it was down in New Orleans and we were there and this tribe of people from Africa came. These were children. It was a choir from Africa and the heart of Africa came and they were singing How Great Is Our God?

But as they came in, I had no idea what they were saying but I could worship with them because it is but a singular focus. Though I could not say it the same way they were, my heart could join into that worship.

You ever wondered why when we get to glory in every tongue, every tribe and every nation, we will all be worshipping one because there is a singular focus and a singular representation.

It may look different on the outside but when you get down to the very depth of it, it is the same thing. Herod had confusion here because he wasn't sure if this was John or if this was Jesus. [22 : 28] Friends, people should get a little confounded by the reality that when we do things in his name, is this Billy Joe doing it or is this Christ doing it?

Because there is a singular focus. Paul says that we are to be focused on one thing, one great aim and that is the kingdom.

And we see that happening here with this faithfulness that John strove to be so faithful to the kingdom that he was called to serve. That his work would be confused with the work of the Savior. Now, his work was not the work of the Savior. We understand it historically but at this time, Christ has not made his way outside of the regions of Galilee very often. So there is a singular representation.

This high cost of faithfulness also comes with a stance taken. Now, John the Baptist never once backed down. No matter who was in his company or no matter who he was talking to, to the outcasts he offered hope, to the religious elite he offered rebuke, to Herod he called him out.

[23 : 36] It says, at that time, Herod thought it was John the Baptist for he himself had had John imprisoned. And the reason he imprisoned him is because of Herodias. Now, Herodias was Philip's wife and Herod Antipas was also married but I guess Herod Antipas saw his brother's wife which according to the book of Leviticus is a absolute no-no.

You remember that we went through on Sunday nights the book of Leviticus. Be holy as I am holy and it says that a man should not look at the wife of his brother and should not long for his brother's wife and should not have his brother's wife because he would be uncovering his brother's nakedness and should not happen but you know they really didn't think about that too much.

So what Herod Antipas did is he decided to get rid of his wife and to take his brother's wife. And John the Baptist called him out on that. John the Baptist says this is not right.

You shouldn't do that. Because see faithfulness requires a stance even when it's not popular. And he decided that even though this was a tetrarch a ruler of the fourth part of the kingdom the stance to be taken needed to be taken and he was the one who would do it.

Now we don't read of him going in and causing a scene. We just read of him telling the truth. This isn't right. Friend, listen to me. Wrong is wrong and right is right and it's really not that confusion.

[25 : 05] There is one great truth and it is revealed to us for I am the way the truth and the life. There is one great standard. We don't have a number of measuring rods in which we measure things.

If you and I are gathered together and we're working on a project together and you have a tape measure and I have a tape measure I hope your tape measure is one inch is the same as my tape measure is one inch, right? You don't need to have a different measurement on yours than I have on mine because if I start calling out numbers to you and you're cutting things through yours but that's not the same thing that I'm measuring my length with and we're going to be all messed up. Well I wonder what's happening in the world. The world's trying to fill in a gap but other people are measuring with a different measurement because there is but one true rod in which we measure things by and right is right and wrong is wrong and there's nothing improper about that.

Incorrect? Maybe. Politically incorrect. Society incorrect? Maybe. Improper? No. That is true. And John knew it and he took the stance and it cost him because when he said it he was imprisoned. Friend, listen to me. The high cost of faithfulness is the truth will always be the truth. It may not make you popular.

[26 : 35] It will not always make you friendly. And it may cost you. But it will not change. The only question we really have to ask ourselves is will we change to society or will we let society change to us?

Because he said he had to do something with John because he took a stance. Now I'm not saying that you it's truth and love. We put those together. I'm not telling you to go out and wear a camel's hair and eat wild locusts and honey and let your hair grow out and kind of be a wild man and go around saying all these things.

Now if the Lord calls you to do that by all means do it. I don't think he's going to but if he does then we'll come to me and we'll pray about it and we'll see if that's what he's calling you to do. But it's truth and love but truth is truth. Don't be afraid to take a stance.

And if the stance costs you okay and we should expect it to cost us because John says this is not right and he was imprisoned for that one thing because as long as he was by the Jordan River and in the wilderness ministering everybody left him alone but the moment he walked into the courts of politics and he challenged the standard society couldn't deal with that.

And they had to fix the problem. And the stance taken cost him a lot. Because the stance taken reveals to us the third thing the sin sickened nature of man.

[28 : 20] Do you know that all men are sick? I'm not saying we're not good. I'm not saying that there's some pretty bad things about us. I don't want to say we're pretty good and have some bad qualities. I mean we are sick.

Man by nature is sick. We are a sin sickened race of individuals. And we can't help it. We've inherited a sin nature.

Now that sin displays itself in differing sins with an S. Sin is our nature. That's who we are at our core. Sins are what we do as a result of our nature.

Some people's sins, their actions as a result of their nature are a little bit more displeasing to us, but that does not mean they are worse than us. I want to say that again.

Just because some people's sins, that is, the fruit of their nature, are more offensive to us, it does not mean that they are worse than us.

[29 : 20] sin. This is why we speak truth in love. Because the sin nature in the most horrific individual is the same nature that I am naturally born with.

And man's great problem is we do not need to change our behaviors, we need to change who we are. We need to change it to the very depth of our being. And we see it here. John the Baptist takes a stance and Herod has him in prison.

Now scripture tells us here in Matthew that Herod wanted to kill him but he wouldn't do it because the people thought he was a prophet. And he was. He's the last Old Testament prophet. So Herod out of fear of the people decided not to kill him.

Now that's pretty sick in itself because he wanted to kill him but he refused to do it because he thought the people might get a little bit upset. But the gospel of Matthew tells us that Herod also enjoyed listening to John.

He made sport of it. Much like people enjoyed listening to Paul and later on Herod Antipas wants to hear Jesus because he wants to see a miraculous deed and he thinks it will be fun and pleasing.

[30 : 24] But yet he kept him imprisoned because he didn't really want anything bad to come. And Mark tells us in his account at a great time or at an opportune time.

Again that emphasis on time. At an opportune time on Herod's birthday by the way pay attention to this this is a historically recorded event. Okay. Josephus the historian of the Roman Empire who was not a believer recorded this in his works of the Roman Empire that this actually took place on a certain time.

One of the apologetics or the defenses of scripture right because Josephus wrote it in one of his books I think it's called Antiquities that this thing actually took place that on at a certain time in an opportune time on his birthday Herodias sent her daughter which by the way let's just go ahead and say it right here was probably about 12 or 13.

Josephus actually names her. I think her name was Salome. So Herodias had been thinking about this that I know the right time when the right people will be present and I know exactly how to do it. Sent in this young girl who danced before her and pleased him and his company so much that he made a pledge. Sin sickened individual.

[31 : 45] And because of the people that were there he made a pledge Mark tells us up to half of my kingdom. Now think about this just for a moment. He said I will give you whatever you want up to half of my kingdom.

Now Herod will have to agree is a pretty sin sickened individual. He enjoys listening to John the Baptist though he really wants to kill him but he fears the people. And he has found some pleasure through the enticement of this young lady.

But now there's Herodias. Herodias has left her brother or Philip her husband to go live with her husband's brother.

Mark tells us the Herodias hated John the Baptist. She was infuriated with him. She really wanted to get rid of him but Herod wouldn't do it.

So really the great hand behind the ordeal is Herodias waiting for the right time to send her daughter in. And Herodias says this because this girl can have up to half of the kingdom and goes and ask her mother what should I ask for in the gospel of Mark.

[33 : 01] And Herodias says we don't want money. We don't want part of the kingdom. We don't want comfort and ease. We want his head on a platter.

Friend listen to me. Be careful with hatred and jealousy. Because it will take you to that depth. And at the counsel of her mother the young lady walked in and asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

That's let's just say it very theologically correct term. That's messed up. But that's who man is to their core.

And because Herod had made this vow in the presence of certain individuals and in the presence of people who would hold him to it because he had said something rashly. He had said it in the heat of a moment and he had said it around the wrong people.

He decided he better do it. Again be careful when you make a vow. Isn't that what scripture says? Be careful when you make a vow. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.

[34 : 03] Be careful how you make a vow. So he made this vow and he was compelled to do it so he did follow through with it and they brought the platter and gave it to the girl.

What a sin-sickened nature man has inherited. Friend that's not just Herod or Herodias' nature.

That's our nature. Which leads us to this fourth thing and I will be through.

In the high cost of faithfulness. The area where we praise. And the area where we rejoice. Because there is a sympathetic Savior. There is a sympathetic Savior.

The scripture says that when John's disciples heard of it, they went and got his body. Pretty bold.

And they took his body and they buried it. And then look at what they did.

The very darkest of moments when everything was falling apart. They were a disciple of John the Baptist which meant they were committed to him. They were following him. They stayed with him.

They learned from him.

[35 : 08] They lived with him. They were committed to him. And in this moment when he has been beheaded and they had to take his body. And that darkest moment what did they do? It says, and then they reported to Jesus.

Isn't it good that there's always a Savior to go to when it all falls apart? And then they reported to Jesus.

And it says, and when Jesus heard about it, he withdrew. You know, there are a few times when we see Jesus withdrawing from the crowds. And I'm wrapping up here.

In his deity, because he is fully God and fully man. But in his deity, he is the Savior we run to when no one else will do. In his deity, he is the one that we can take our greatest problems, our greatest hurts, our greatest discomforts, and our greatest sin to.

In his deity, he is the cure for our sin nature. In his deity, he is the answer to our every question. In his deity, he is the hope for our every anxiety.

[36 : 17] And in his deity, he is the help for our every helpless moment. And in his humanity, he needs to withdraw for a minute.

Because we do not have a Savior who cannot sympathize, the book of Hebrews, who cannot sympathize with us in our weakness. Because he feels the pain. He feels the hurt.

This is his cousin. This is the forerunner who went before him. This is the man who broke the silence of God among the people of God.

And he withdraws. We have a Savior, my friend, who is big enough to handle whatever we can bring him. And he is close enough to hurt with us when we're hurting to the very depth of our being. Praise God for a sympathetic Savior who has called us to the high costs of faithfulness. Because he's not calling us somewhere.

[37 : 20] He's not willing to go. He calls us to take up our cross and follow him. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this day. Thank you for your word.

Lord, we thank you for the hope that it offers us in our darkest of moments. Lord, we pray you wrap your arms around each and every one of us. Lord, may your love, care, and concern be evident.

Lord, we love you and we thank you. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.