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Intro

(upbeat music) - Good morning, good evening, and good afternoon. Whenever and wherever you're listening, we just wanted to extend the warmest of welcomes. So kick back and relax as we continue through our sermon series.

Pastor Larry Davis

- Well, it's good to be with you, fam. My name's Larry, I'm one of the pastors here. If you're with us online, it's really good to be with you as well. We're gonna actually be incorporating communion in today's service as we end it. We usually take it at the end of the month, but we're adding one, or excuse me, on the very first Sunday of the month, but we're adding one just to really capture the experience of what we're gonna be learning and discussing today. So if you wanna grab some elements at some point during the service to participate, that would be great. Everybody in the room? You guys are set. Some of you maybe are online and you're just taking a peek through the window, checking this place out. I would love to give you this as well. This is my personal invitation. Show up in person, check it out. We got good peeps. We actually, for those of you guys who are here, we have new swag today. We usually do shirts that have some sort of message to them. We've done give grace, we've done be kind, we've done for for a minute about what we're for. So we like making statements. So this new one is you matter. So that's a really powerful statement you guys wanna be a part of. Today's message is actually just about that, saying that people matter. Be careful when you're wearing this shirt, when you're talking to somebody, 'cause they're gonna watch you walk away and be like, huh? So, if you're newer with us, we've been walking through the book of Matthew. This has been what we call expository teaching, where we're literally taking it verse by verse. We're trying to capture the context. We're trying to capture the culture that was taking place in the first century as 21st century followers or listeners, learners, disciples, apprentices. And we're trying to take that stuff and chew on it little bits at a time. And so, we've actually found ourselves now actually halfway through this book. If you haven't been here for the first half, you're gonna be able to jump right in because each and every week we're learning about what Jesus says, how he acts, the things that he likes, what he's like, which ultimately is our picture in connection to who God is, the God of the universe. If you wanna know who God is and what he likes and what he's about, then we look at Jesus because that was him, Emmanuel, with us. So we're in chapter 14, and we are today talking about a very familiar story. We're gonna be starting in verse 13, but to get us there, to look at this in context, we need to read the very beginning because there's something that's important that sets up just kind of the ethos of what's taking place in the life of Jesus, his disciples, which leads into our story today. So starting in verse one, Matthew tells us, at that time, Herod the Tetrarch, which literally means ruler or governor of a region or an area and land, not King Herod. Some refer to him as King Herod, but he wasn't actually a king. Reports, he heard reports for the first time about Jesus. And he said to his attendants, "This has to be John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." So he's now hearing for the first time about Jesus. There's been miracles that have been happening. There's huge following of Jesus and the things that he's doing. And so now Herod is hearing about

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this and he makes this little teeny statement, this clue, and we suddenly find out that Jesus's cousin is now dead. We haven't heard that before. Last we heard, he was in prison. And so we're finding out. So Matthew does something really interesting here. He pauses and goes back. And you as the listener, 'cause this is how this was given, he's going, "You as the listener, "I don't think you gotta know what happened, So let me just give you a recap of what took place. So now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, which is now Herod's, Antipas' wife. For John had been saying to him, "It's not lawful for you to have her." So he had taken what his brother's wife is now his, and he's saying, "This isn't good. This isn't cool at all. Like, this is no bueno." Herod wanted to kill John, 'cause that's what they do. But he was afraid of the people, because people, they considered John specifically a prophet. Now we go back to this scene on Herod's birthday, talking about the daughter of Herodias, which is now his stepdaughter, was his niece, danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. We talked about this last week. I'll let you dig into more of that last week. Prompted by Herodias, her mother, she said, "Give me here on the platter the head of John the Baptist." And the king was distressed, but because of his oath and his dinner guests, the people that are watching, his pride, his want for power and authority, he ordered that her quest be granted. And then John the Baptist was beheaded in prison, this gruesome death. His head then was brought on a platter and given to her, and she carried it then to her mother. And John's disciples came and took his body and buried it, gave it an honorable burying. Then they went and told Jesus. So that's like the setup for our story today, which then becomes a very familiar story. There's no like in scene, next scene. That was the start. He had paused, he told about this gruesome death of Jesus's best friend, a very close confidant, a worker in the Kingdom of God movement. And then he gets back into the story that the disciples came, they buried him, and then they went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard, now it's a today's passage. When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. And when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." I just wanna give you a little image of what's taking place here. He's now on a boat, went to Israel, we got to lead a group of people here. Here's an image of what this boat would look like. we got to see this. I know you travel all that way and you're like, I'm gonna look at a little wooden thing through a piece of glass. That's not really it, but here's a cool thing that happened is they actually discovered a Jesus time boat buried in the mud and there was this huge operation to actually bring it out and keep it. You can go to this next image. This is crazy. This is thousands of years old. They found it in the mud, it's really cool. So it gives you kind of a scope and an idea of what that would have looked like in these times. Of course, it was much bigger. This was just the bottom, but it's really interesting. So here's a map. We went through this last week a little bit. The region of Galilee, that purple area, is where Antipas, or Herod Antipas, or Herod, who we hear about this story, that was his region. His brother was this orange area. Now, most likely, Jesus, when he heard this news, was in Capernaum. This is where he lived out of and did a lot of his ministry, if you can see that there to the left in the Sea of Galilee. And where he went to in the secluded place where they

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landed was Bethesda. And if you can see, it's just on the other side of the purple area, which was his brother Philip's region, which it's Etruria, which he landed. And so it's almost like he's hearing this news. They're getting away to a solitude, a secluded place. And then they're landing over here, even far away from the rule in the region, now Herod's heard about them. This is bad news, especially for the kingdom movement, thinking like, if that just happened to John, what can happen to me? I mean, so there's all kinds of emotions that are buried in the midst of this. I mean, I think it's also really interesting that when he landed, he saw crowds and he had, it says he had compassion on them. In that moment, friends, he had every right to say, "I am tired. I'm tired, I don't need to see people right now. I'm full of grief. I'm going through a difficult time and a season. I just wanted to get away. I don't need to see people. I don't want to heal people. I don't want to be around people. And I don't know, have you ever experienced that where you're just like, I'm tired, I'm done, someone else can take care of it? I'll say this. Those of you who have children or have had kids, you know a different kind of tired than most of the world knows. No one can explain the depths of like seat-sleep deprivation, right? That moment literally in the middle of the night when your child's crying and you tell your spouse, "Go get your child," and you're like, "It's your child and your kid. It's your turn." And then you're fighting over some kid and you're like, "I don't care who takes him. I'm staying asleep. It's 2 o'clock in the morning," right? That kind of depth of like, "I'm just done. I need some space," right? But it says he had compassion. On the Greek word there, literally the root of it talks about that it came from, like they use this term, it came from the bowels, like the guts of them, the depths of them. And so this word compassion that's used here talks about like when Jesus then saw these people that had followed him that were also sick and broken and in need and had heard of the kingdom of God movement, that he had compassion like this thing. When all this challenge is like, "Oof, do I have compassion when I see a need and a hurt that literally comes from like the inside of me that's hurting? Like, I just got to do something. I just got to meet their needs. I just got to show up," right? Says, "As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a really remote place, and it's like getting late. Send the crowds away so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food. Then Jesus replied, they don't need to go away. You give them something to eat. And they said, we only have five loaves of bread and two fish. Bring them here to me, he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass and groups of 50 to 100 or so, taking the loaves and the two fish, looking up to the heaven, he gave thanks." Or some of your translation says, "He gave a blessing and he broke the loaves. Then he gave it to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate," it said, "and were satisfied. And the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over, And the number of those were about 5,000 men, besides women and children. So if you add that up, we're looking at like a crowd of like 12,000-ish, you can guess. Doesn't end there. We get into kind of the next story that's blocked out in most of your guys' Bibles, but it's a continuization. Immediately, this has just taken place. Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him onto the other side while he dismissed the crowd. And after he dismissed them, he went up on the mountainside by himself to pray. End that day. Next week, Jeff will hop into the middle of the night (laughs)

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as we go, which is this other infamous story of then Jesus is walking on water. What? Like, come on. We're, like, knocking these out right now. I mean, something tragic and horrific has happened and something miraculous that actually is only shared with us. This is the only miracle that's shared with us in all of the Gospels. So, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the four Gospels. This is the only miracle that all of them talk about. They don't include other ones. Everyone kind of, maybe one or two include something similar. So, this was a really impactful moment. I think it's actually impactful if maybe you took time in your community group this week, I'm only sharing with you from the Matthew version. I'm not overlaying all of the different points of view. But if you were to sit with someone, or even today, or throughout this week, and read each one of the accounts to get a larger scope and view of what had taken place, different people's point of view. It's similar like to this room, through worship or through the time that I'm speaking to you, different things stand out to you. So although we're all experiencing the same thing, everyone has a different opinion of what was impactful or important to them or how they received it or what they saw. So it really paints a full picture. But what we're doing is we're sitting just here in Matthew, and this is how Matthew has framed the story. This deep tragedy rolls into grief that brings us into this very familiar story where Jesus, out of his grief and hurt and sorrow, takes that and turns it into compassion for others. I think what's really interesting when you come to something like a familiar story with this, for many of you that's familiar, is you can just kind of like read it through. You can read it through and be like, "Yeah, I already kind of know the story." And you pop through it, you're like, "I don't even really know it. I know kind of the outcome. Jesus is powerful, he does crazy stuff." and he like, you know, makes things and it's really powerful, good day, that's awesome. Another Jesus story, high five, really good stuff. But when you come to a familiar story, a practice that I found really helpful for myself is to actually pause and to sit in the midst of the story. Like literally sit in the midst of the story. Like to pick a rock to sit on in the scene. Like to pick a boat that you're gonna sit in or pick a character in this story and actually sit back and say, "What do I see? "What do I hear? "What do I smell?" What's taking place outside of this? Just what we're reading. It's why we love books or why we love movies, right? And so pick a character in this and then begin to go through the story. I'm gonna pause here just a second. Something that I found actually really interesting this week and it's, I think, healthy and good for all of us here is I discovered that I have a really different viewpoint and interpretation of this scripture than many of you who grew up in the church. Specifically when it comes to the disciples, I feel like that this conversation is really focused, and this whole scene is really focused on the disciples and how Jesus uses the disciples, but specifically the conversation he has with the disciples and how he uses them and challenges them and teaches them and teaches us in these really beautiful ways. I don't know if you knew this, but the word Christian, which is a word that we often use in the New Testament, if you look, it's only found three different times. But the word disciple and apprentice is used over 260 times, which challenges us when we read a story like this. And when we come here, really, Matthew is challenging us and asking us, are we, are you, are me, becoming a disciple, an apprentice of Jesus? Because really, here's the fact, friends. We are all a disciple of

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something. We're following something. We're letting something influence us. And so the question is, is what are you a disciple of? Even the question is, is what do you have compassion for? What do you have empathy for? What need do you see and respond in the same type of way as we learn from Jesus how to be a disciple of Him in the way that He responds? So I'll give you some differences of opinion as I go through this about how we read this. I'm going to mostly give you mine, because I have the microphone. But I will acknowledge specifically where maybe some of you guys have interpreted something different that, for me personally, I've struggle with, to be like, I don't see that. I don't even know where you can come up with this. And it's a posture, and it's a learning, and as we continue to dig. So I just wanted to say that in the room, that there's different ways that people understand this, and interpret this, and use this in their own life. So we now are going to pick this character. Imagine that you're a disciple, and you're watching John the Baptist's followers come up to him and share the news, this story of this gruesome death, I mean, on a dinner platter, beheaded because of some drunken oath, some sexual affair that's caused civil war, and now just a kingdom that continues to rumble. And now this is a person that's been affected by it. Imagine the grief that Jesus is feeling. We know that he knew how to grieve, Because we see later in the book of John, when his friend Lazarus dies, he was overcome with emotion and he wept. So in this same moment, as you're watching your apprentice, I mean, your rabbi, your friend, this person they've spent a year and a half with, hearing the news of how his family member, his partner, the one who's been there with him, actually literally paving the way for this kingdom movement, has died. And you're seeing him overcome with emotion. And he just comes to you and says, guys, we got to get away. We got to go somewhere. And now as a disciple, you're sitting there going, yeah, yeah, OK, we got you. And they scoop him up. We got a boat. You should imagine, my friend's got a cabin. It's a few miles this way. It's in a secluded place. And so you take him onto the boat, and he's not even talking. And you're just staring at him, being like, what do we do? Like, how do I handle this? Like, what's-- oh, my gosh. He's just overcome with grief. And some of the disciples there were actually disciples of John the Baptist and had done work with them before they were with Jesus. And they're overcome with their own grief. They can't even imagine. There's also this fear that's going on, again, of like, if that could happen to him, what can happen to us? I mean, like, it can all be over in the midst of a moment like that. and you're just trying to love and you're just trying to care for them and you're going to this secluded place and you come around this corner and you see where your boat's gonna land and what do you see? People. Broken, hungry, poor, wretched, needy people that have heard that he's gone off and pushed off to a solitary place and are so hungry, they've tried to figure out how to follow him. And for you, as you're sitting there in the story, I mean, like, are you excited about that? No. Like, we gotta push off somewhere else. Like, we gotta keep Jesus away from people. He's just hurting. I gotta care for him. I gotta scoop him up. And then we learn this beautiful thing. We see this beautiful thing that it says that Jesus saw them and he had compassion for them. And then he suddenly now is walking off of the boat, showing with his actions what it is to be a follower of God, and who God likes, and who he loves, and what he cares about. And it says that he began to spend time with them, and heal them, and pray for them, and he's asking them their name. And

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the disciple in this situation, we're not just, like, sitting back in the boat being like, "Come on, like, what are we doing?" I mean, you're paused, you're, like, looking at the situation, and they were constantly involved in Jesus's ministry, and they're like, this is like equential Jesus. Like he just, this guttural compassion and care for people, he can turn the tragedy and grief in his life into loving another person. And so now he's caring for all of these people, and the disciples can't help to be again, yet again, a part of it. And now they're not just again, standing there. I mean, they're working the crowds too. They're caring for them, and they're loving on them, they're hugging on them, and there's thousands of them. And if you're sitting there as the evening, as it draws to dusk, you're looking around and you see that kid over there tugging on mom's arm saying, "I'm hungry. "I'm hungry, mama." Or you see someone else sharing like a little bit of food that's hungry, and as they're kind of walking around, thousands of people. And so you as a disciple, you sit there, and this is where now, this is my viewpoint. This is the new learning thing. You sit there and you look around and you see the scene, and Jesus has begun to kind of like rub off on you. When you saw people as a burden, as an issue, now you started seeing people and started having compassion for them as well, and started looking for solutions. This is groups of people that are in need. They're hungry, they're poor. They're in need to hear of the good news. And you sit there and you go, like, what are we gonna do? And so you go over to, you know, another disciple or Peter or something, and you're like, do you have any food? Like this, I got somebody that's really hungry, they could really use some food. And then you start taking inventory and you're like, you know what? We've only got five loaves and two fish, bro. Like, we just brought it for us. This was just for the 12th. Like, we just were going off into like a little solitude place. So now you have an issue. You have a lot of hungry people here and you're having compassion and they're there, but it's getting late. You're in a desert place. You're in a solitude place, and markets are far away, and people are hungry. So you're like, "We need to slow this thing down." And so then it says, in verse 15, "As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "Hey, Jesus, this is like a remote place, and it's getting really late. Send the crowds away so that they can go get some food from the villages. This is...many of you have maybe heard this a little differently. You've heard this posture of the disciples that's saying, "Hey, Jesus, it's getting late. This is actually our opportunity to make people go away so we can have some peace and quiet. Remember, you're sad. We're sad too. Let's get back to us." For many of you, that's actually how you've read this, that the disciples saw the crowd as an issue. Now, the way that I've interpreted it is that this is actually Jesus rubbing off on his disciples that they're seeing and having compassion now. And so they're walking up saying like, "Oh man, we see a problem, we see a need, and now we need to do something about it. We can't do anything about it. We don't have enough food." You're reading some other ones. have enough money to buy enough food for all of these people. And so they go up and tell Jesus, "Hey, we need...people are hungry. I don't know if you know this. I mean, we've kind of been wandering around. You need to send them away." And so then Jesus responds, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat." To which they already had a response. We already checked. We only got five loaves and two fish. I mean, it was just a party at 12. And now it's like thousands, literally. It's like Jesus sat

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there in a second and he looked at him and said, "That's a great idea. This is good, I love it. Like, you're starting to get it. You saw a need and you came up with a solution. You came up to me." And then he throws them off and says like, "You don't need to send him away. "You give him something to eat." To which constantly we're stunned. We bring our objections to Jesus and he has other objections. And we're like, "But, I don't have enough right here." Which we thought probably would have ended the conversation. And he would have gone like, "Oh, good point. "Yeah, we don't have enough. "Okay, let's send him home. "Dismiss, dismiss, dismiss." But then he does what only Jesus can do, what only God can do. He says, bring your meager and nothing to me. Bring your little teeny bit to me. That's all he said. We have only here five loaves of bread and two fish. Bring it here to me. Can you go to the next one so I can see that? Go to one more. And then he directed the people to sit down on the grass and taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven. He gave thanks, he broke the loaves, and then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people." Now, a really beautiful part of this moment and this scene is this reflection of what Jesus does with our meager, and then he breaks it and he gives it away. Matthew-- it's really fascinating-- he's told this story for decades. And if you start to look in this, what is this story reminiscent of? It's reminiscent of the Last Supper, the Passover. If you look in chapter 26, starting in verse 26, I have it here for you on the screen. You can see some of the language and the connection. So in verse 19, 14, today, it says, "Taking the five loaves of bread, the two fish, he looked up to the heaven and he said, a blessing. And then he broke the loaves and he gave it to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the crowds." Now the Passover meal with his disciples. Now they were eating and Jesus took the bread. And after saying a blessing, he broke it and gave it to the disciples. And he said, take and eat. This is my body. And he took the cup. And when he had said a blessing, he gave it up, then saying, drink it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do you see that there? I mean, Matthew has been telling this story for decades. He didn't write the book of Matthew until about 30-ish years after Jesus was gone. And as he's reflecting on this story of this desolate place, and he's painting this picture of Jesus as being the new Moses feeding people in a desolate, secluded desert of a place, He's likening it to and he's connecting it to that moment of the last supper where Jesus broke this bread, he blessed it, and then he gave it to the disciples to give life to others. That Jesus is in that moment saying, "There's going to be a far more grisly, gruesome execution than John the Baptist. that this body will be broken, and yet this affliction that is given now will be given out to you to give out to others so they can be a part of the kingdom. It's beautiful. It's beautiful. In the midst of that moment, these disciples were suddenly tasked with this monstrous kingdom moment that they were completely inadequate for, to take their meager, their little, and to feed thousands. And then, so it's interesting, you're in the scene. Jesus takes it. His brain here takes it, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it back to the disciples in the midst of his grief. My goodness, friends, how many times have we just brought ourselves in front of Him, and He takes us, He breaks us, and He gives back some life for you to give it to someone else? And you're sitting there, and you've got these baskets, and you're walking over going, OK, I don't understand. You take this basket,

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and you walk out to this group of 50 to 100, and you kind of feed everyone. And you're looking, and you're like, OK, we're empty. And you walk back. and like, He gives you more. And now you're kind of freaked out. And you're like, oh my gosh. Right? And you're like, okay, I don't really know what's going on. Everyone's like getting into good mood. You know, like their needs are being met. And so you're like exhausted. You're like, okay, I think I'm done. And you're just tired and you come back to Jesus. You're like, I'm so tired. And He's like, but I got more for you. And you're just like, oh my goodness. Like, okay, you're filling me up and I'm going back and I'm giving this away. Isn't it beautiful? This is a familiar story for us. Jesus feeds the 5,000. This is a story, friends, about how Jesus feeds the thousands and the millions through his disciples, you and I. And may we today, may we this week, may we this year, May we as people transform and change and be a people that begins to see the needs of others and then come to Jesus and say, can you please take care of this atrocity, this situation, and then be prepared for him to bring his objections. Why don't you do something about it, disciple? And then friends, bring your objections to him. I don't have enough. Aren't we good at that? I can't do anything about that. All I, I don't have enough money. I don't have enough food. I don't have enough money. I mean, all I have is a paintbrush. All I have is like an instrument I can play. All I have is like a truck to put some, I don't have, I can't, I can't fix that whole situation. And then he goes, bring it here to me. Let me take your meager, your little, and make it miraculous. And have compassion, a deep compassion. And so today, as we partake in the bread and the cup, may we bring the people on our hearts and on our minds to Jesus. And say, Jesus, how can you step in? and then let him bring his objections. And then you can bring your objections. And may we allow his brokenness, his blessed to go out and to live through you and I today as we participate in the bread and the cup. There's some stuff around the room. There's cups that on the top have some juice, but right underneath that has some gluten-free bread. And I'm gonna invite all of you in your own space and your time and reflection to start to begin to think about what compassion looks like, like what you matter actually looks like. If you're new with us here in the room today, and you're just like, "I don't know if I take that "or I'm a part of that." No one's judging you, no one's watching who's getting up, who's getting down. This is also an opportunity to reflect on a powerful, beautiful image of Jesus and His compassion. That it doesn't matter how little the thing is that you have, that you're carrying. It doesn't matter how broken you feel, how lost you feel, how dead you feel. He makes things alive. He begins to mend things and He finds those things that are lost. You matter to Him. and everyone should matter to us. So let me pray, and then you're welcome to stand up and begin to partake in groups or however you want. Father, thank you for your body that was broken for us to be used as a blessing to others through us. Would you continue to feed us in this moment so that we would continue to feed others? We love you, in your name we pray, amen.

Outro

And this concludes this week's podcast. We hope you've enjoyed spending some time with us. And if you haven't already, like and subscribe to our YouTube and find us on Instagram @engatecf. See you next week.