

## The Fame of Jesus: Revealed in Glory. Distinguished by Faith

Matthew 14:34-36

**MPS** Jesus revealed Himself as God worthy of all glory that Christ-followers might distinguish their lives for His glory by faith to follow Him.

**OBJ** Every person can understand a real Christ-follower as revealed by Matthew's gospel by **Three Distinct Responses to Jesus**.

**READ** Matthew 14:34-36

*"And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. <sup>35</sup>And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick <sup>36</sup>and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well."* **Matthew 14:34-36**

**Matthew concludes this section with a summary of Jesus' impact and influence.** We've already seen that His reputation preceded him. No matter what shore he landed on, people waited, and crowds quickly swelled at the news of His arrival. Now with the disciples, they arrive back on the Northwest shore at Gennesaret. And again, as he was recognized, word quickly spread, and the crowds began to swell. They brought to him all who were sick and urged, Matthew says, that if only they could touch the fringe of His garment they could be healed. This is the second time we encounter this (see Matthew 9:20-22). Imagine witnessing this, and with every one Matthew records, *"And as many as touched it were made well."* What powerful imagery, people coming from every direction and any distance just to touch Jesus' outer garment. Jesus remains in the middle of all the people, lingering to serve each one in no hurry to leave. [We are left with an overwhelming sense of awe at Jesus, as with the previous miracles, that He is like no other.](#)

**TRANS** [Have you ever thought about the most amazing thing you've ever witnessed Jesus do?](#) Hold that thought. We'll return to it in just a moment. Though brief, this passage is significant. Matthew provides a summary of Jesus' ministry that we can identify **by three distinct features**.

The **first distinctive** of Jesus' ministry was the way **He showed great compassion for all people**. Large crowds gathered everywhere he went. We see this again in today's passage. And when they came Jesus didn't turn them away. He ministered to them as only He could do, and usually until very late in the day. No one walked away from Jesus without being touched by His compassion. We also see Jesus' compassion in who he ministered to. He spent His time pursuing the marginalized, not the elites. He engaged people that others shunned, and loved people that others feared. He met people in their distress and illness, in the wounds and hurts of life because He went to where they were. He didn't discriminate in the way he ministered, and all who came found their needs met by Jesus.<sup>1</sup> And as we are reminded here, it was His compassion where He displayed the greatest power. There was no barrier from Jesus to minister to all who came to Him, His power flowed generously and endlessly to people. [Jesus' ministry is marked by His great compassion for people.](#)

A **second distinctive** is that His ministry was marked by **the proclamation of good news**. The most distinctive trait of Jesus' teaching is as one who had authority (Matthew 7:28-29). People from all walks of life, from the simplest to the most educated elite, were amazed at His teaching. People came in great numbers and stayed long hours just to hear Him teach. That's what gathered the crowd at the feeding of thousands. His authority was not only in the way of His delivery, as a master storyteller, but principally in His message. Jesus taught about God in a way that people had never heard nor understood before. He taught that God desired obedience out of love, and not adherence from fear. He showed how the highest of all Law was love, and how love for God directed one to obey His Law. He showed how love for God and love for other people were inseparably linked. Jesus turned religion on its head and introduced a God who came to have a relationship with His people, to know, be known by, and dwell among His people. When Jesus taught God's Law, all at once

<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, [The Gospel according to Matthew](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 386. Morris states, "Matthew makes it clear that Jesus had total control over sickness; he thoroughly healed all who came to him."



it became the most beautiful, powerful, and most glorious truth to the mind and heart. **Jesus' ministry was marked by His teaching, which always revealed the love and truth of God in glory and majesty.**

A **third distinctive** of Jesus' ministry is **how people responded to Him and the extent of His influence.** Jesus was the hottest trending topic of the day. Every shore he stepped on had crowds of people waiting on him, and others ready to announce where he had landed. All kinds of people were drawn to Jesus. The lowliest and forgotten of society all found comfort from Jesus. The paralytic, the demon-possessed, and the leper exiled to a city of refuge all found from Jesus what they could not find anywhere else, a warm welcome. The toughest centurion bowed humbly before Jesus, and the paralytic with no control over his body walked home after His encounter with Jesus. (Matthew 8-9) Jesus sought out the hated tax collector (Luke 19:2) and humble fisherman alike. (Matthew 4:19) Jesus commanded the attention of all from the educated elite (John 3) to the wealthy (Matthew 19:16f). He engaged the social ill-repute (John 4) and the religious outcast (Matthew 15:21f), and was never bothered to entertain innocent children (Matthew 19:14-15). Everywhere Jesus went people flocked to be near him. **Jesus' fame was far-reaching and His impact wide and potent in lives of people who encountered Him.**

#### Redemptive-Historical – Gospel / Literary Purpose

Matthew's emphasis highlights the authority of Jesus to heal, save, all who come to Him. And yet we have so much more. The power of God in Jesus that we experience today is not only for temporary needs but eternal life. **By His teaching and miraculous power, Jesus distinguishes Him as God for people to believe for salvation.**

**Jesus revealed Himself as God worthy of all glory  
that Christ-followers might distinguish their lives for His glory by faith to follow Him.**

**TRANS** Everyone that encountered Jesus walked away blown away by the amazing things that He could do. **So why, then, was there such a vast difference in how people responded to Him?** The responses of people can be divided into two distinct groups, the crowd and Jesus' followers. When we consider these two groups, there are distinctions that emerge.

#### Crowd versus Followers

The crowds followed Jesus around wherever He went. They were everywhere, always waiting with their requests and demands to experience Jesus' power. We can understand because what you got from Jesus wasn't like what you got anywhere else! **But can you imagine how wearying this would be?** (All Pre-school moms nod their heads in unison.) We often hear the weightiness of the demand from the disciples, who got tired, frustrated, and overwhelmed by the constant demand. But Jesus never grew tired of people and their requests or demands. He regularly ministered late into the night to bless all who had come to Him. And many in the crowds had their lives powerfully changed by Jesus' power, being healed from lifelong illnesses and sickness. **Many saw their lives improved by their encounter with Jesus but were not eternally changed by it. This is how a person remains only as a part of the crowd.**

The people in the crowd heard Jesus' teaching, many agreeing or liking what He said, but not believing with saving faith. They would consider what He said, maintain what they liked and disregard the rest. **How do I know this?** Some temptations and propensities are common to humanity, whether first or twenty-first century. **What's the difference between liking something and saving faith?** The best way to answer this is Jesus' parable of the soils and treasure found in a field. The distinction between liking what you hear and saving faith is determined by what you do with it. Surely some in the crowd became followers of Jesus. But many who initially identified with Jesus, "disciples" (John 6:66) turned and walked away after hard teachings. John later explains that the reason they went away was because they were never a real follower. (1 John 2:19) **People of the crowd often experienced the same Jesus as any other but did so on their terms so they can make Him fit their life, instead of adjusting their life to Him.**

**TRANS** Not everyone in the crowd walked away in unbelief. Matthew can't record the life of every believer. Many in the crowd DID believe in Jesus. They worshiped and followed Him by faith. So, while they may remain part of the crowd in the text, because we never see them individually named, that is not to say that they did not believe. But my use of "the crowd" today represents another segment of those who are distinct. The way some people believed and followed Jesus is



distinguished for us too. The faith and characteristics of those who followed Jesus clarify a Biblical model from Matthew's account of a real Christ-follower.

## OBJ **Three Distinct Responses of a real Christ-follower.**

### 1. A life of faith centered to follow Jesus.

Jesus' disciples are not identified by perfect understanding nor perfect obedience. They didn't understand much of what He taught, but they didn't walk away to dismiss what He said either. They believed Jesus was God but didn't know all that meant. Because of their faith, they lingered after to inquire further and learn more so they could understand and obey. By obedience through faith their lives were re-oriented with Jesus and His teaching as the centering principle for everything. Faith is what led them to follow Him, and serve others in His name, instead of just showing up where He went. **The first distinguishing quality that distinguishes a real Christ-follower is faith to follow Jesus.**

The saving faith of a real Christ-follower centers all of life on Jesus by standing on the eternal Truth of His Word. A life centered on Jesus holds to what we know to be true about Him, as revealed in His Word, even when our experience or feeling seems to say something different. By the trust of His Word Jesus renews our mind and transforms our life. People of the crowd came to be made well from sickness and illnesses; Jesus came to make people new. The new life Jesus gives bring a new way of living that is centered on Him. **Saving faith treasures God's Word above all else to walk with Jesus in His truth.**

**ILLUS** Several years ago my mother was diagnosed with lung cancer. This was shocking news for us because there was no known cause in her life, and she was healthy. It was scary to consider the unknown that was before us, but it never caused us to question God, whether He was good or in control, or any other myriad of questions that arise. As a matter of fact, every time these questions arose, we already knew the answer to them; God is good, and He is in control. These were the foundation for our faith that we knew to be true. No life situation could change that. We sought God out of faith for greater understanding. And we prayed confidently and unashamedly for healing. But whether or not healing came would not determine whether or not He was God, was good or in control. Praise God, my mother has now been cancer-free for several years. **But how could we trust regardless of the outcome?** Well, because thirty years ago my mother was diagnosed with blepharospasm and dystonia, a degenerative muscular disorder that affects the eyelids, as well as face and neck muscles. Both cause chronic pain, and difficulty in seeing and swallowing because of involuntary muscle contractions. We've prayed for decades for God to heal, and we continue to pray for healing, but He has chosen not to. Our immediate situation does not change His eternal truth; He is still God, He is still good, and He is still in control, so by faith we follow Him.

### **HYMN** Wherever He Leads I'll Go

Take up thy cross and follow Me, I heard the Master say. I gave my life to ransom thee, surrender your all today.  
Wherever He leads I'll go. Wherever He leads I'll go. I'll follow my Christ who loves me so. Wherever He leads I'll go.

**People in the crowd came to Jesus for a change of their life situations; Jesus came to make people new.** Many still gather near to Jesus and benefit from being close. Maybe you've been close to Jesus in all your church experience. **Jesus invites you to believe and follow Him, so you will be made like Him.** The question you need to ask yourself is not only, **"What difference DID Jesus make in me?"**, but also, **"What difference IS He making in me?"** **Jesus revealed that He is God, worthy of all worship. Christ-followers live by faith a life that centers all to follow Jesus.**

### 2. A Life Together with other Christ-followers.

When the crowds dispersed, they each went home. When the disciples left, they were still together. No, they didn't live in a commune, but they did live intentionally in community. Acts 2 and 4 are the most succinct Biblical descriptions for how the disciples formed the patterns for their life of following Jesus. And the most distinguishing characteristic of how they lived is described as together.

***And all who believed were together and had all things in common. Acts 2:44***



The togetherness of the disciples' life came from their life being centered on Jesus. They devoted themselves to the practices that strengthened, deepened, and enriched their faith in God. (Acts 2:42) And Luke records that each one experienced the awe that comes only from God because of their togetherness. This does not mean every person experienced it in the same way at the same time. Rather, it tells us that the work of God among their "togetherness" became a source of awe for each one. What they witnessed God doing in each of their lives became a source of glory and praise for all of them. The best way to recognize and experience what God is doing in your life today is to live a life distinguished by being together with His people.

**ILLUS** Maybe you would say, "But Pastor, I've tried groups before, and I just never get anything out of them." To that I say, you are right, and this is a common experience. But know that the weeks that you get nothing from group are the weeks God wants you putting something in to serve the others in group, by the gifts and ministry He's given to you.

Jesus called people to believe and follow by walking with Him. Christ-followers walk with Jesus in life together with other followers. What step do you need to take today to devote your life to God by being together with His people?

### 3. A life lived to impact the world by sharing Jesus.

The most distinctive quality of the disciples following Jesus was how they served other people in His Name. They were the ones moving through the crowd to advance the mission of Jesus' Kingdom. They carried out what Jesus brought to share. Their lives were being lived to give themselves away more than just to take and receive. But in the midst of living to give themselves away, they became the most changed by Jesus. When truth is received by faith, it changes the way you live because it changes the way you think and the love you hold.

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

Is your life one of showing up to take from Jesus, or are you living to advance His Kingdom to all people of the world? Jesus changes the way we live when we follow Him by faith. Christ-followers live to impact the world by sharing Jesus.

Jesus revealed Himself as God worthy of all glory that Christ-followers might distinguish their lives for His glory by faith to follow Him.

**CLOSE** Now back to my earlier question. Was the most amazing thing you've ever seen Jesus do something around you, or something in you? I think this is the real distinction between the crowd and the disciples. The crowd experienced amazing things by Jesus all around them. The disciples were in awe of the change Jesus was making within. What difference is Jesus making in your life?

