

## Basking in Matthew

### A walk through Chapter 13

September 3, 2019

I've been basking in the book of Matthew since the past April. It seems I cannot go very fast. Every sentence explodes with meaning, and I am taking the time to look up full meanings of key words from the original Greek language. I love thinking of Jesus' Hebrew Name, Yeshua, the Name the people called Him, and closing my eyes to imagine the scenes. I want to absorb all I can know about my Savior.

I have just waded through Yeshua's parables in Matthew 13. He had been teaching by the Sea of Galilee where He had established a temporary home (Matthew 4:13). I picture the profile of Him sitting on a hill overlooking the Sea.



from the *Be still* card in the *Quietness Collection*

In Matthew 13, Yeshua imparted truth to the multitudes and disciples using the nature around Him. He used seeds and sowers, rocky and thorny landscapes, fertile soil, birds, roots, tares and wheat, mustard seeds and trees, nests, leaven, fire, sun, fields, pearls and fish. He used simple, everyday tasks like planting seeds, growing wheat, buying and selling, and fishing to unfold deep spiritual understanding.

Then I came to verses 53 through 58 of Matthew 13. Verse 53 says, "And it came about that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there." Wow! He came to the point where He knew His teaching in that place at that time was finished. He could have shared another parable, but, the Greek words let us know that His discourse was complete with nothing lacking. It was perfect! There was nothing more to say. The listeners had received their fill and had their opportunity. Yeshua never begged or cajoled or struggled until they understood, but spoke and entrusted them to His Father.

Verse 54 tells us that He then journeyed to His "own country" (most likely speaking of Nazareth), going west from the Sea of Galilee. At the perfect time, He entered the synagogue and began teaching there. They marveled at His wisdom and miracles and wondered... wasn't this the son of the *tekton*? The Greek *tekton* has been translated *carpenter*, but the word means *craftman* or *builder*. During Yeshua's life in this region, builders built with stone; trees were scarce. Nazareth was near a rock quarry. Yeshua was likely a stone mason, a craftsman who cut the stone to fit them together.

This past May I raised a portion of our patio pavers using sand. I've built many walkways in my time, but never had to actually cut the stones. Stonework is hard, heavy, sweaty work. It puts callouses on your hands and builds muscle. Jesus was a skilled, diligent worker. His hands were marked by toil and service. He was skilled, not schooled and yet possessing the wisdom of the Ages. He had no overload of information. He just opened His senses to the beauty around Him, drank in the truth of it as it was imparted by His Father, and poured it out to eager listeners and suspicious, religious rulers alike.

Verse 55 of Matthew 13 implies that His earthly father, Joseph, might have died in His early years. His mother was Mary, his brothers were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (in Hebrew - Miryam, Ya 'akov, Yosef, Shim 'on, and Y'udah) and He had sisters.

His childhood neighbors remembered Him growing up with His brothers and sisters. They remembered His joy and obedience, and they remembered His diligent work ethic as He grew older; But they didn't remember Him teaching. His life had been focused on labor, until it was time for Him to begin His ministry (Matthew 4:12-17). The neighbors' pride clouded their lenses. Rather than soaking in the beauty of the pure, unadulterated truth falling from His lips, they were offended by His authority. Yeshua said to them, "**A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and in his own household.**" (*Greek-prophētēs* – ambassador of God, exhorter, truth-teller, interpreter of God's will, teller of future events)

So, progressing to Matthew 14, we see in Verse 13 that Yeshua must have then left His hometown and gone back near the Sea after He heard the horrendous news of John the Baptizer's death at the hands of Herod. What a contrast we immediately see in Chapter 14 between the cold, callousness of ungodly hearts and the soft, fertile, empathetic heart of God reflected in Yeshua Who, upon hearing about Herod's wickedness against His friend, withdrew in a boat to a lonely place (Matthew 14:13)... only to pour out His compassion again on the needy multitude that found Him.

*Father, make us more like Yeshua. Speak to us of Yourself. Open our eyes to Your truth surrounding us. Purify our lens to hear. Help us see that what we need is more of You, not more information. Help us to put time with You and Your Word first (Matthew 6:33). Thank you that though we deserved nothing, You gave us everything through Yeshua's perfect sacrifice on our behalf. We praise You!*

Sending love and hope and grace in Him,  
Beth Ann

*A hymn by John G. Whittier, 1872*

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways;  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,  
In purer lives Thy service find,  
In deeper rev'rence, praise.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and Thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still, small Voice of calm.

In simple trust like theirs who heard  
Beside the Syrian sea  
The gracious calling of the Lord,  
Let us, like them, without a word,  
Rise up and follow Thee.

