

MATTHEW



STUDY GUIDE

Introduction

When was the last time you were afraid? Share a few stories about times you were afraid (they could be recent, or it could be any memory of a time you were afraid).

How does fear influence your choices and actions?

How would you describe a state of fear in comparison to a state of peace or security?

TEXT: Matthew 13:52-14:36

This week's text presented a set of four stories. They all come immediately after Jesus *Semon of Kingdom Parables* and the four stories contrast for us the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God. Here is the contrast we observed.

The First Banquet: Herod Beheading John the Baptist

Lavish setting, luxurious menu.

Power maintenance and self-protection.

Herod sacrifices the life of another for the sake of himself.

The Second Banquet: Jesus feeding the 20,000

Humble Setting, Simple Menu

Compassionate care for others.

Jesus sacrifices his own comfort for the good of others.

Moreover, the two banquets each were accented by the stories connected to them. Before Herod's banquet, Jesus is rejected by his family, emphasizing the opposition to the ways of the Kingdom of God. After Jesus' banquet, Jesus extends his compassion even to Peter in his moment of "little faith."

What struck you most about this contrast between these two "banquets"?

How else do these contrasting banquets reveal the nature of the Kingdom of God?

YOUR MOVE

The center piece of the whole passage is one phrase, "Jesus had compassion."

In what relationship are you most in danger of action out of a fear like Herod's and instead you need to cultivate a compassion like Jesus.

We all know that fear is a common tool used in our political system today. What would it look like if compassion was a more common and fundamental posture in American politics?

What is one way you are going to act from a posture of compassion this week? Share that with your community so they can pray for you.