

Youth Teaching Resources

September 1, 2019



Season After Pentecost (June 16-November 24)

On the Road with Jesus

Luke 14:1-14 (RCL 1, 7-14) – “A Way to the Top”

Choices That Matter

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – “Make the Right Choice!”

Jeremiah 4:11-28 (RCL 11-12, 22-28) – “Delay and You’ll Pay”

Jeremiah 8:18-9:3 (RCL 8:18-9:1) – “Go on and Grieve”

Jeremiah 32:1-15 (RCL 32:1-3a, 6-15) – “Never Give Up”

www.nurturingfaith.net

Subscribe to *Nurturing Faith* to access the core Bible content for this lesson.
Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A Way to the Top

Luke 14:1-14 (RCL 1, 7-14)

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

I'm often surprised by what students say. Sometimes, this is a positive thing and you get an insight into what bothers them or the depth to which they are thinking about things. At other times, when they say something you want to rush and put it back in their mouth for them. Whichever the case may be with your student, the most important thing is that you are listening; that you are present to be with them. To share lift with them. To want them to tell you what is on their mind. What they say is important, but being present means even more.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin the session by showing the clip "Bad Table Manners" from *King of Queens*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Why is she so disgusted she has to leave?
- 2) Who is the person with the worst table manner that you know?
- 3) Who taught you table manners?
- 4) Why do we have table manners?
- 5) Is there ever a time when we shouldn't follow convention?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Luke 14:1-14. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What trap were the religious leaders trying to set for Jesus? How do you think they responded when Jesus asked the first question?
- 2) Why does it matter to sit closer to the head of the table?
- 3) What does Jesus say our goal should be?
- 4) How does Jesus say this goal should be lived out in relation to the dinner party he was at?
- 5) How do these two stories connect to one another? What is the overarching theme of these two stories?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Who were the Pharisees?
- 2) What does it mean to be "fit for the kingdom"?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Who fell in the well?

Transformation

Conclude your session by placing a large piece of paper at the front of the room with a long table drawn on it. As you are hanging the piece of paper, distribute markers to the group and encourage them to think about groups of people that might not always be invited to the table. When you have given them some time to think, encourage them to come write the groups of people they thought of around the table. End your time with a discussion about what it would take to bring these different groups to the same table

Close with a prayer thanking God for the diversity of our world and for the courage to speak up for the people who aren't always invited to the table.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

The text—The Revised Common Lectionary text begins with 14:1, then skips to vv. 7-14. The reasoning is probably because the story of Jesus’ healing of the man with dropsy and his following response to critics are very similar to a healing and controversy story in last week’s text.

Parallel sections—Luke 13:10-14:35 is marked by an interesting sequence of stories in 13:10-35 that are followed by a group of very similar stories in the same sequence in 14:1-35. The story of the bent-over woman in 13:10-17 is echoed by the account of a man healed from dropsy (also on the Sabbath) in 14:1-6. The healing of the woman is followed by two related parables about the kingdom in 13:18-21, and the healing of the man is followed by two parables about the kingdom in 14:7-14. The following verses in each chapter, 13:22-30 and 14:15-24, are concerned with who will enter the kingdom of God. Finally, Jesus’ approaching suffering in Jerusalem in 13:31-35 is paralleled by the question of followers taking up their cross to follow Jesus in 14:25-35.

Pharisees—The Pharisees weren’t as “high and mighty” as we sometimes think. They tended to be lower- or middle-class Jews who belonged to a fraternal society dedicated to following the written and oral law as closely as possible. Pharisees were sometimes portrayed as self-righteous, but they weren’t typically among the elite – unlike the wealthier Sadducees. Although Jesus sometimes criticized both Pharisees and Sadducees, they were also at odds with each other. While the Sadducees accepted only the Torah as authoritative, the Pharisees also accepted the prophets and the oral law.

Why the silence?—When Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees whether it was lawful to heal someone on the sabbath, they remained silent. An oral law among the rabbis taught that one should only practice healing if someone’s life was in immediate danger. They would have known that: Why do you think they had no response?

Empty cups?—Joan C. Webb once published a book called *Meditations for Christians Who Try to Be Perfect* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993). It’s a good book for ambitious Christians. Here’s a thought from the book:

Years ago, after I asked God to fill my cup, it seemed, instead, that he ate my lunch. As I saw my dreams fade away, I worked harder to hold on and eventually burned out. I wondered where God was and why he let it happen.

Now as I reflect back, I wonder if he could not fill my cup because I already had it full with my personal agenda. I wanted to accomplish great things for God, but I had my own ideas. Perhaps he was waiting for me to empty the unusable contents so he could pour in his plan.

Digging Deeper *continued*

When we admit our need and ask God for help, it is like emptying our life cups. Emptiness, though uncomfortable, is a necessary prerequisite to filling.

Our overflowing cups yield anxiety. God's portion produces security (p. 83).

Fit for the kingdom—Jane Yolen tells a wonderful story related to this theme. It's called "Once a Good Man," from *The Hundredth Dove and Other Tales* [New York: Schocken Books, 1977], pp. 53-57).

The story concerns a certain man with whom God was pleased, and God offered to grant him anything his heart desired. The man's only wish was to see both heaven and hell with his own eyes. An angel took the man to hell, where he saw broad green pastures and picnic tables loaded with delicious food that smelled wonderful. People sat all around the table, but they were all thin and hungry. The people were strapped to their chairs. Their arms were free, but there were steel bands around them that prevented them from bending their elbows. The people could see the food and smell it, but there was no way they could pick it up and bring it to their mouths.

The good man was amazed at this. The angel then took him to heaven, and he was even more astonished to see a very similar scene. The same broad, green pastures. The same long picnic tables laden down with ham and chicken and barbeque. The same delicious smells. People were sitting around these tables, too, and the man was surprised to see that they were also strapped to their chairs, and they had steel bands around their arms. Yet, these people were well-fed, smiling, and joyful. And that is because, while they could not feed themselves, they did not hesitate to reach out and feed their neighbors, who fed them in return. It is not the reward of heaven that is most important, but being the kind of person who fits in there.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Who fell in the well?

In v. 5 of today's text, Jesus asked "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?" That's the NRSV translation, also followed by NET and NAS95. The NIV11 has the more gender-neutral "child" in place of "son," but the King James Version has "an ass or an ox."

Who fell in the well (or pit)?

This is one of those cases where ancient manuscripts disagree, and translators must rely on the work of text-critics to determine the most likely original text.

Here, the word "son" (*huios*) appears in some of the earliest known manuscripts, including the parchments P^{45, 75}, the fourth century *Vaticanus* (B), and the fifth century *Washingtonianus* (W).

The word "donkey" in place of "son" appears in the 4th century *Sinaiticus* text () and some eighth century texts. It's likely that a copyist sought to harmonize this verse with 13:15, where Jesus used a donkey and an ox as an illustration. Deuteronomy 22:4 also speaks to helping a neighbor if his donkey or ox has fallen, and Isaiah 32:20 likewise pairs donkeys and oxen.

The Western text D, often copied, has "sheep" in place of "son."

One principle of textual criticism is that the more difficult reading is likely to be the most original: it's more likely that a later scribe would smooth out a difficult text than that he would make a clear text more difficult.

The combination of "son" and "ox" seems less natural: it is the more difficult reading. The witnesses to it are also older. Thus, though "donkey and ox" may sound right, the better reading is probably "son." It was the son, not the donkey or a sheep, who might have been in danger of joining the ox in falling down a well.