

# Adult Teaching Resources

July 21, 2024



## Mark My Words

July 7, 2024—“Home and Away”—Mark 6:1-13

July 14, 2024—“The Death of the Party”—Mark 6:14-29

**July 21, 2024— “No Rest for the Weary”—Mark 6:30-56 (RCL 6:30-34, 53-56)**

## Some Things Never Change

July 28, 2024— “The Miracle Man”—2 Kings 4:42-44

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# No Rest for the Weary

Mark 6:30-56 (RCL 6:30-34, 53-56)

## FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline 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.

### Key Verse

*And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.* (Mark 6:56)

### Opening

After everyone arrives, remain in the large group. Ask everyone to share their favorite “Jesus miracle story.”

What is the story?

Why is it your favorite?

What does that story reveal about Jesus?

What does that story reveal about humanity?

What does that story say to you?

Give everyone time to share, encourage everyone to share, even if their favorite miracle has already been shared.

### Reading the Bible

What did the disciples do when they gathered around Jesus? (They told him all that they had done and taught.)

What did Jesus say to them? (“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”)

Why did he say this to them? (For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.)

What did the disciples do? (they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.)

What did the people do? (They saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.)

What did Jesus do when he went ashore? (he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things)

## Reading the Bible *continued*

Where did they land when they crossed over? (Gennesaret)

What happened when they got out of the boat? (people at once recognized him and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.)

What did the people do wherever Jesus went? (they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.)

## Making Connections

When have you been so tired (mentally, emotionally, physically, and even spiritually) after doing something for God that you needed to rest and get away? What work did you do? What kind of exhaustion did you experience? How did you take care of yourself?

Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were done with a ministry situation, only to find out that others still needed you? How did you respond? Did you have enough left in your “tank” to do what was needed? What happened?

What is the largest meal you have been a part of? How many people were fed? Where did the food come from?

What is the largest meal you’ve had to prepare? How many people did you feed? How long did it take to prepare? How much food was left-over?

Our Lesson Writer reminds us, “Sometimes we might feel similarly ill equipped when faced with overwhelming tasks, and we wonder how we can do what needs to be done. Jesus wanted the disciples to look beyond the normal human resources that came to mind, to be willing to share what they had, and to trust Jesus to make that enough.” When have you felt ill equipped to do something for God? How did God provide for you to do what was needed?

With the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, our Lesson Writer tells us, “The gospels offer no detail about how the miracle took place, relating only that Jesus broke the paltry provisions into pieces and gave them to the disciples to distribute.” What do you think the miracle of the multiplication of food looked like?

Jesus met the crowd’s physical and spiritual needs. What physical and spiritual needs do we see in the world about us? What gifts can we offer toward meeting those needs?

Who is a recognizable figure in your city, someone who would draw a crowd by their mere presence? How does this person handle such notoriety?

Our Lesson Writer tells us, “The gospels suggest that most people failed to understand Jesus’ true identity and purpose, seeing him only as a traveling healer.” Why do you think they failed to see Jesus as more than a traveling healer? What does that say about Jesus? What does that say about the people?

## So What?

Remaining in the large group, ask these questions for conversation and discussion.

Who do you say that Jesus is?

Do we only follow Jesus so that we can get to heaven?

Do we only follow Jesus so that we have someone to pray to when we are sick and in need of healing?

Do we only follow Jesus so that he can meet my needs?

Spend some time sharing and listening to everyone share their thoughts and ideas on those questions. The way we respond to these questions reveals a lot about how we relate to God.

What does it say about us if the only thing we can say about Jesus is that he's our "ticket" to heaven?

What does it say about us if the only thing we can say about Jesus is that he's waiting for my prayer so he can heal me?

What does it say about us if the only thing we can say about Jesus is that meets my needs when I pray.

What is Jesus about?

How can we get that message out so that others might hear and understand?

## The Challenge

This week, share the message about who Jesus is with someone who might not understand what Jesus is all about.

## Prayer

Loving God, even though we keep coming back to this place week after week, studying and talking about Jesus, we confess that we still have more questions than answers. Thank you for the miracles that reveal a bit of Jesus to us. Thank you for the stories that reveal a bit of Jesus to us. Thank you for the teachings that reveal a bit of Jesus to us. Open our minds and hearts so that we can continue to embrace and absorb more of who Jesus is, not just for our own understanding, but so that we might be able to share you with others. Amen.

## 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.

**A deserted place**—The traditional site of Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and fish is at

Tabgha, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, not far from the village of Capernaum. In the picture, the Church of St. Peter’s Primacy is the gray stone building at right. The roof of the Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes is seen at left. A relatively barren hillside shaped roughly like a theater rises behind. Byzantine Christians thought it would have been an appropriate setting for seating thousands of people, and built a church to commemorate the story.



**Fish**—The most common commercial fish in the Sea of Galilee is a type of tilapia marketed to tourists as “St. Peter’s Fish.” Tilapia are typically hand-size or larger. Sardines were also commonly caught in nets near the shore. Their smaller size made them easy to preserve by drying and salting. The fish in the story were probably sardines.

**The manner of the miracle**—None of the gospels explain how the miracle took place, only that Jesus broke the bread and fish before giving it to the disciples, who distributed it to the people, and that there were twelve baskets of leftovers.

Some writers have speculated that the miracle was not really one of multiplication, but of sharing. In their view, many people in the crowd had food with them, but had kept quiet when the disciples asked for potential supplies. After hearing Jesus pray and seeing him set the example, however, they furtively brought out and shared the bread and fish they had brought, so that there was enough, and more than enough.

That explanation may be appealing, but it robs the story of its power. The whole point is that Jesus is the Messiah who provides bread in the wilderness, even as God had provided manna for the Israelites. The 12 baskets of leftovers are more than an indication that each disciple returned with a full basket: they recall the 12 tribes of Israel.

## Digging Deeper *continued*

Scholars often suggest that the feeding of the 5,000 was designed to show that Christ came first to the Jews, as the fulfillment of their messianic hopes, while the feeding of the 4,000 in Matt. 15:32-38 (cp. Mark 8:1-9) demonstrated the extension of Jesus' provision to the Gentiles as well. In that story, the word for "basket" is a word typically used by Greeks, and the leftovers fill seven baskets, symbolizing Christ's provision for all nations.

**Lessons**—The jaw-dropping miracle was a mighty witness to the multitude, but perhaps even more significant for the disciples. They learned from Jesus that deep compassion can provide energy to keep going, even when one is feeling drained. They also learned by experience that the most overwhelming situations are not without hope. As Christ's followers trust in Jesus, offer to him their abilities, and obey his commands to love, marvelous things can be done—even in the face of obstacles that may seem insurmountable.

**Different takes**—The story of how Jesus rejoined his disciples—after an early morning stroll across the sea—is also found in Matt. 14:22-33 and John 6:15-21. The parallels are marked by significant differences, most notably Matthew's solo inclusion of the episode with Peter wanting to join Jesus on the water. This story would have had special significance to the early church, which faced hard times and would have preserved this account as a reminder that Jesus offers hope and calm for even the worst of our dark and stormy nights.

**How far out?**—How far from shore were the disciples when Jesus came to them? The Sea of Galilee is about five miles wide at its widest point, and eight miles long. Mark's version of the story, on which Matthew probably depends, says only that they were "in the middle of the sea" (Mark 6:47).

Matthew says that the boat was "many *stadia*" from shore (Matt. 14:24). One *stade* was equal to about 200 yards.

John adds more specificity to the account, saying the disciples were "25 or 30 *stadia*" from shore (John 6:19). That distance, about three miles, would suggest they were about halfway across—indeed, "in the middle of the sea."

# 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.

## Why are the gospels so different?

With this study, as in other studies of the gospels, we take note of ways in which the Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus in ways that are both similar and different.

Even a surface reading shows that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are quite similar at many points, and they are called the “synoptic gospels” because of this (“synoptic,” from Greek, means “seen together”).

A few scholars have argued that Matthew was written first, and that Mark and Luke abbreviated what was found there. Most scholars, however, agree that Mark, the shortest of the gospels, was written first. Part of the evidence for this is that when Matthew and Luke include stories that follow the same order, those sections are drawn from Mark.

Some writers believe the gospel of Mark reflects the memories of the Apostle Peter, with whom Mark reportedly worked. The author of Matthew could possibly have been the apostle, but was more likely someone writing in his name. We know Luke as the author of both Luke and Acts. He was a Gentile physician who had come to know Christ and traveled with Paul. He claimed to have done research to gain as much information as he could before writing his books, which were addressed to “Theophilus,” which means “lover of God.”

It seems evident that the authors of both Matthew and Luke had access to Mark’s gospel, and included much of its material in their books, often in a slightly abbreviated form, or shaped to emphasize their personal interests: some believe Matthew was writing mainly to a Jewish audience, while Luke wrote for other Gentiles. Luke’s gospel also gives extra attention to the role of women and to those who are sick or poor.

Matthew and Luke also share several of Jesus’ teachings that are not in Mark. This material is often attributed to an otherwise unknown collection of Jesus’ “sayings” that scholars call “Q” (from “Quelle,” a German word meaning “source”).

In addition, both Matthew and Luke incorporate unique materials not included elsewhere, notably their separate narratives about the birth and infancy of Jesus: Matthew has more to say about Joseph’s place in the story, while Luke focuses more on Mary. Both Matthew and Luke sometimes mix and match their various materials in different ways.

Thus, Matthew is thought to consist mainly of material from Mark, Q, and Matthew’s distinctive source, while Luke consists of material from Mark, Q, and Luke’s separate source.

John’s gospel, which reflects a more philosophical approach and a more developed Christology than the synoptics, shows relatively little dependence on them. It was probably

## The Hardest Question *continued*

written toward the end of the first century, a generation later than the synoptics, which are often dated to around 60-90 CE.

The many differences between John and the synoptics make it all the more remarkable that the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 appears in it, too: it is the only Galilean miracle of Jesus that occurs in all four gospels.