

# Adult Teaching Resources

July 28, 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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# The Miracle Man

## 2 Kings 4:42-44

### 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

*He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.*  
(2 Kings 4:44)

### Opening

After everyone arrives, form smaller groups of 3-4. Once each group is settled, ask these questions for small group conversation and discussion.

Have you ever known someone who constantly sought to one-up other people?  
What example can you share?  
Was this person hopeful in the fact they were better or were they actually better?  
Who have you know that could talk a big game and then back it up?—“not bragging, just stating facts!”

Give each group time to share, then open the floor for large group conversation and discussion before moving to the Bible.

### Reading the Bible

Where did the man come from? (Baal-shalishah)

What did he bring? (food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack)

What did Elisha say? (“Give it to the people and let them eat.”)

What did his servant say? (“How can I set this before a hundred people?”)

How did Elisha respond? (“Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord: They shall eat and have some left.”)

What did the man do? (He set it before them; they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.)

### Making Connections

Before getting to our short passage, our Lesson Writer shares the miracles Elisha performed leading up to today’s miracle. What did Elisha do? What do those acts reveal about the prophet?

## Making Connections *continued*

When have you had to make a meal with minimal ingredients? What were the ingredients? What did you make? How many did you feed?

Our Lesson Writer tells us, “Elisha miraculously fed 100 men with paltry supplies. Though 100 men hardly compares to 5,000, the miracle can be read as a foreshadowing of Jesus providing food for thousands.” What other Old Testament events and stories are a foreshadowing of Jesus’ ministry?

When have you given an offering of something that was immediately put to use? Did you know your gift would be immediately appropriate? Why did you give what you did?

Have you ever been part of a ministry experience where you weren’t sure the goal would be met, but somehow, everything worked out the way it was supposed to? What was the ministry event? What was the goal? What were the obstacles that brought on doubt? How were those obstacles overcome?

How does a “scarcity” mindset affect the way we relate to, and provide ministry for other people?

How does an “abundance” mindset affect the way we relate to, and provide ministry for other people?

When have you unconditionally trusted God to provide when you could find no solution to a situation?

## So What?

Ask everyone to gather back in their small groups from the beginning of the lesson. Share what our Lesson Writer says by reading the entire “An Important Opportunity” section of the lesson.

After reading, ask these questions for small group discussion and conversation.

Do you think our church has a mindset of scarcity or abundance? Why do you say that?

Do you think our church is more inward focused or outward focused? Why do you say that?

What do you think is the right balance for a church when it comes to scarcity/abundance and inward/outward focus?

Where does faith come in when we talk about meeting needs for others? Is “praying for resources” enough action for ministry? Why do you say that?

Where does intentional action come in when we talk about meeting needs for other? Is “you have what is needed, how much can you give” too abrupt for ministry? Why do you say that?

What must we do to have the attitude of generous hospitality in our church ministries?

Give each group time to share, then open the floor for large group conversation and discussion.

## The Challenge

This week, be intentional about living into an abundance mindset, trusting that God will provide what is needed for the ministries that are important to you. Don't be afraid to do something because you don't think you have the resources.

## Prayer

Loving God, you remind us that great things can happen from small beginnings. Help us to take on the mindset of Elisha, trusting that when we see a need, no matter what resources we have available, that when we totally partner with you, good things will happen. May we have the courage to step out and take a risk for the sake of your kingdom. 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.

**Really?**—The work of Elisha remained in Elijah’s shadow, in part because Elijah’s ministry was often carried out on the public stage and with high-profile people. He had frequent run-ins with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, for example, portrayed as evil yet popular characters in the biblical narratives.

Elijah may be best known for defeating the 400 prophets of Baal atop Mount Carmel, where he bested them in a challenge to see whose god could send fire from heaven to incinerate a sacrifice. When the prophets of Baal failed, Elijah doused his offering with water to make it more difficult. He then prayed to Yahweh, who sent a fire so hot that it consumed water, wood, and bull in a great conflagration. Afterward, Elijah reportedly slaughtered all 400 prophets of Baal by a nearby stream, thus dealing a blow to Baal worship in the land (1 Kings 18:20-40).

Elisha had no such direct confrontation with the prophets of Baal, but he did anoint the Israelite military commander Jehu to lead a coup that would replace King Joram (2 Kgs. 9:1-13). The task had been assigned to Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:6-7), but Elijah had not done it. After assassinating Joram, Jehu led a purge, not only of Ahab’s descendants, but of many who worshiped Baal (2 Kgs. 10:15-27). Exercising considerable hyperbole, the narrator claimed that in this way “Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel” (2 Kgs. 10:28).

Though Elisha did not stand tall on Mount Carmel to fight Baal’s prophets with prayer and a sword, he engineered a coup that reportedly dealt an even greater blow to the worship of Baal.

**Baal-Shalishah**—The location of Baal-Shalishah, mentioned only here, is uncertain, though some have identified it with Kefr Tilt, 16 miles north of Lydda. That was known as a fertile area, but it would have been a very long way from Gilgal, unless there was another location named Gilgal.

A story in 1 Samuel 9:4-5 pictures Saul passing through the territory of Shalishah while looking for his father’s lost donkeys: that would have been in the territory of Benjamin or southern Ephraim.

The Lucianic rescension of the LXX and the Old Latin translations identify Baal-Shalishah with Bethlehem, perhaps because of its association with bread (*beth-lehem* means “house of bread”).

The precise location of Baal-Shalishah is of little import, but the placename Baal-Shalishah may have served as an intentional reminder that Yahweh’s power had eclipsed that of Baal.

# 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.

## How do Elijah and Elisha compare?

The Bible study points out how the narrator seems to be intent on showing that Elisha's "double portion" of Elijah's spirit enabled him to do even greater things. One way to illustrate this is with the number of miracles attributed to each.

Here's a list of miracles performed by Elijah, not counting divine provisions received, or his ascent to heaven in a whirlwind, since those came at God's initiative:

Elijah multiples flour and oil for a widow in Zarephath (1 Kgs. 17:8-16)

Elijah raises the same widow's son from the dead (1 Kgs. 17:17-24)

Elijah calls fire from heaven to defeat the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs. 18:20-40)

Elijah predicts a drought, and later prays for rain to end it (1 Kgs. 41-46a)

Elijah outruns Ahab's chariot to Jezreel (1 Kgs. 18:45b-46)

Elijah calls down fire to consume King Ahaziah's men (2 Kgs. 1:9-12)

Elijah parts the Jordan with his cloak (2 Kgs. 2:8)

And here's a list of miracles attributed to Elisha, not counting military victories that he predicted (2 Kgs. 3:16-20; 9:1-10), or his prediction that a famine would end (2 Kgs. 7:1-2, 18-20):

Elisha parts the Jordan River with Elijah's mantle (2 Kgs 2:13-14)

Elisha purifies the spring at Jericho (2 Kgs 2:19-22)

Elisha curses disrespectful children and two bears maul them (2 Kgs. 2:23-24)

Elisha multiplies oil for a prophet's widow to pay off her debt (2 Kgs. 4:1-7)

Elisha declares that a childless Shunammite woman will have a son (2 Kgs. 4:8-17)

Elisha raises the same woman's son from the dead (2 Kgs. 4:18-37)

Elisha purifies a pot of stew made with sickening ingredients (2 Kgs. 4:38-41)

Elisha multiplies twenty small rounds of bread to feed 100 people (2 Kgs. 4:42-44)

Elisha heals the Syrian commander Naaman from leprosy (2 Kgs. 5:1-14)

## The Hardest Question *continued*

Elisha strikes his greedy servant Gehazi with Naaman's leprosy (2 Kgs. 5:20-27)

Elisha makes a prophet's borrowed ax head float to save it (2 Kgs. 6:1-7)

Elisha blinds Aramean raiders and leads them to Samaria (2 Kgs. 6:15-23)

Elisha, on his deathbed, facilitates victory over Aram for King Joash of Israel  
(2 Kgs. 13:14-19)

Elisha's bones bring a dead man back to life (2 Kgs. 13:20-21)

Elijah was the better known of the two, but the narrator seemed intent on emphasizing that Elisha was also a prophet to be reckoned with: by this count, his miracles doubled those of Elijah. Elisha may not have ascended to heaven on a whirlwind, but his power was believed to have persisted, even after death.