

Youth 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)

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Tyler Johnson

This youth 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.

Gathering

As your group comes together, ask students how they are doing and what their week looks like. Reflect on the previous week's challenge.

Opening Activity

What are some conversation topics that are absolutely cringe, especially with your parents or other adults? I mean physical reactions to an adult bringing up a topic. What would those topics be? Feel free to share, but maybe don't overshare; you're still in a church after all.

Believe it or not, the Bible has some pretty cringe stories that a lot of teachers and pastors don't know what to do with, and today is one of those passages.

Listening to the Scripture

Read aloud Mark 6:14-29.

- This story is perhaps a callback, and not perfect linear time with present moment Jesus. However, the author uses this to signal that Jesus may in fact be in danger. What are the things John did that you think would get Jesus in trouble?
- What was Herod's gut feeling behind having John killed? Fear, Sadness, anger? A mixture of the three?
- Cringe moment: a woman dances for the king. The king is so impressed that he's willing to give her half his kingdom. She asks for John the Baptist's head on a silver platter... Why? What is the motive behind asking for someone's head?
- What can this passage teach about the threat that Jesus posed to people in power, especially power that they themselves cannot understand?

If you would like to continue the discussion, consider *Digging Deeper*.

- Why are there so many Herods? Well, think of Herod like a family name like Smith, Brown, or Johnson. Knowing each one is not necessary to understanding the story, but it is central to know who has the power in this time. How that power is used, and how others react to that power.
- Who are the Herods in your life? The ones with the power, influence, and means to get what they want. While they probably will never ask for a head on a plate, what is the Bible's purpose of telling the story (earthly power is ultimately a farce).

Listening to the Scripture *continued*

If the group is up for a challenge, discuss what Tony poses as *The Hardest Question: Why does Mark Devote So Much Attention to this Story?*

Mark is the shortest gospel of the four. It is strange, given Mark's aptitude for brevity. However, the fact that this story is told in its entirety indicates the impact this event had on the gospel writer. Whether it is the death of a great prophet, or juxtaposition to the danger Jesus was in, we can learn that earthly flexes of power and privilege have a short life in comparison to the impact that Christ has had on humanity from then to today.

Application

Don't be cringey. Kidding! Rather take a look at your life this week and ask yourself about your motivation for earthly power and influence, or an eternal peace that is all understanding.

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.