

Youth 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

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.

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 multiplies 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)

The Hardest Question *continued*

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

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.