

## **Two Men, Two Ways to Live This Life - Mark 6:14-29**

### **June 15, 2008 - Skip MacMillan**

#### **Two Men = Herod and John**

##### **Herod**

This is not Herod the Great at Jesus' birth but his son, Herod Antipas.

"King Herod" is no king but a Tetrarch, he ruled over a fourth of Galilee, called Herod Antipas Tetrarch.

The ablest of Herod the Great's sons, he was a great builder and astute in Hellenistic culture.

##### **Herod's past is haunting him**

Hearing about Jesus, Herod said: "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!" (Mark 6:16).

Paranoid, Herod's past sins grew into a guilty conscience and that conscience began to haunt him.

Edgar Allen Poe moment: his past sins are taking their toll on his mind, paranoia is setting in. "Outwardly, we live in the fear that we will be found out and that some day the consequences of our evil deeds will catch up with us" -Barclay.

##### ***What do you do with the guilt and fear of your past?***

Herod attempts to manhandle his guilt, attempting to gloss over it and press on.

He could have taken his guilt to Christ, confessed his sins and embraced Christ's unconditional love and forgiveness. The same offer is available to you.

John said of Jesus, "*Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

##### **Herod's Lust**

###### **Herodias: in lust Herod married Herodias**

The story: Herod was a married man and one night traveling he spent the night at his brother Philip's house and fell in lust with Philip's wife (Herodias).

Herodias was his brother's wife and furthermore the half niece of both Herod and Philip.

To marry Herodias, Herod had to divorce his current wife. This would come to bite him, more later.

John confronted them on their "marriage."

Herod arrested John at the request of Herodias because:

"Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him" (Mark 6:19).

John is embarrassing her in front of friends and family.

She wants to rid herself of this man, his message of conviction, and the guilt she felt.

Dealing with conviction and guilt.

Like Herod, instead of confronting her sin and embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ to set her free from the guilt, she takes matters into her own hands. She is trying to control her own destiny. She thinks killing the messenger will silence the truth but the message would continue to ring in her ears.

###### **The Dance: Herodias develops a sinister plan**

She will use Herod's lust (sin) against him for her own agenda.

It was Herod's birthday, a big party is thrown, many important guests are there.

The dance: Herodias' sends her daughter out to dance. What kind of dance?

**The Depravity of it all:** Herod's lust, Herodias' desire to kill John, using her daughter to create lust.

". . . she pleased Herod and his the dinner guests" (Mark 6:22).

Herod played right into Herodias plan

Herod is so lost in his sin, so caught up in the moment, so distant from God; he blurts out,

"Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

Sin makes you say and do some pretty stupid things.

After consulting with her mom, she said, "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter!" (Mark 6:25).

His own sin of lust was used against him, it cornered him, forced his hand, made him do what he did not want to do.

*The truth about sin is that it takes you further than you ever wanted to go.*

*Lust is never satisfied; his brother's wife wasn't enough and neither was Herodias' daughter.*

Like many men today, Herod excelled at work but his personal life was a wreck. And like men today his messed-up personal life eventually caught up with him and cost him his job and his life.

1. Herod's lust would place the blood of John the Baptist on his hands.  
His own willful sin forced his hand to say and do what he did not want to do.

2. Herod's lust cost him his life. The father of his first wife waited patiently to avenge his daughter. Seven years later he killed Herod and destroyed his army in a battle, AD 39.

Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

1 Tim. 6:11-12, 1 Thess. 4:3-5.

### **Herod's brush with God:**

"Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him" (Mark 6:20).

**Feared** – afraid, put to flight by terrifying, seized with alarm, startled by strange sights and occurrences.

Herod was intrigued by **John**, found him, distinct, genuine, someone very different from himself. Herod was intrigued by **John's message**; it was pure, straight, true and loving, and it stimulated Herod's soul.

Even though John told him his marriage to Herodias was wrong.

Herod knew his sin, knew he was wrong, but he was hearing something deeper than condemnation, something more powerful than his sin. He was hearing about an eternal hope, forgiveness, truth, and love found in Jesus Christ.

The gospel brushed up against Herod, it got his attention, it got him thinking and wondering. He sensed something, he was tasting and experiencing Christ.

Validated by Herod's response when Herodias's daughter asked for John's head. Herod was "**greatly distressed**"--used to describe Jesus' agony in Gethsemane.

But as intriguing as John and his message were, as powerful as the questions that came to mind, as strong as the doubts were that maybe his way of lust and power were not the way, they would prove not enough to persuade him. Sin's claws clung deep into Herod's heart; his brother's wife,

his dinner guests, all the money and power of this world were waiting. His lust for the temporal pleasures of this world overran the eternal truth and love of the gospel. He was a coward; he gave in and yielded himself over and gave the orders to have John beheaded immediately.

### ***Herod has two brushes with God***

1. John who brought conviction, truth, and a call to humility and repentance
2. Jesus who brought grace, truth and redemption

"When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. . . he hoped to see him perform some miracles. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answers . . . then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him" (Luke 23:8-12).

*He was so close to God, saw John face to face, heard his words. He physically saw Jesus but did not and would not take that final step. He never moved from intrigue to believe in Christ.*

*We try to keep God locked up in a box, so we can hear when we are in the mood but forget when we want to live our lives as we want.*

*Men, you need to take that final and most difficult step toward Christ, He is calling you: turn toward Him and believe.*

## **John**

God appointed this man's life, to live contrary to this world, to prepare the way and baptize God the Son, to speak a pure and simple message of repentance and belief in the LORD. Jesus said, "Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11), "And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come" (Matthew 11:14).

### **Prophecy and John's mission**

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way . . . a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him' " (Mark 1:2-3).

### **John's Lifestyle**

Clothing: camel hair, leather belt. Food: locusts, wild honey, didn't drink, never married or had children.

### **John's Message**

". . . preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4).

"Repent for the kingdom of God is near" (Matthew 3:2).

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

### **John's Humility**

"After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:7-8).

John 3:25-30

### **John's Strength**

He confronted the Religious establishment: "you brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. . . the axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:7-10).

He confronted Herod and Herodias: "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife" (Mark 6:18).

**Questioned:** "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:3).

His strength and courage to press on through doubt and discouragement, to remain resilient and committed even though he wondered if it was all true. He pressed on.

## **Application**

### **Relating to Herod and John**

We are embarrassed of the coward behavior of Herod but at times we can relate to Him. Herod was unable to speak up and say "NO" along with Adam in the garden. We experience Herod when we don't speak up and say no: no, I will not go there; no, my wife and children are too important to me; no, my relationship with Christ means more to mean than anything else. We know we should but we coward and remain silent and go along with the crowd. John on the other hand, being driven by God, spoke with authority, love, and power to anyone and everyone.

John spoke up, stood up, lived it, and paid the price, and gained the pearl of great price.

Herod had no **internal compass** except to react, feed the flesh, and maneuver to gain and protect.

John's internal compass was Jesus Christ, full of wisdom, truth, love, and strength.

### **How to move past Herod and live like John:**

**Gospel: "Look (to) the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).**

**Mature: "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30).**

My ways must become less and His commands must play a greater part of my life. My cowardice must become less and Christ's strength and courage must become greater. My feeding of the flesh must become less and Christ's reign in my heart must become greater.

My unwise and self-serving decisions must become less and the ways of Christ must become greater.

**"He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30).**