

Matthew 14.1-12

Sermon from the Grave

Up till NOW – Matthew’s Focus on KING JESUS > Now meet wanna be king

Story Centers – 2 MEN with Very DIFFERENT Spiritual CHARACTER

FLASHBACK to NOBLE Memory of VALIANT Prophet JOHN Baptizer

Lasting IMPACT of his MESSAGE triggers STORY > Sermon from the Grave

FOCUS on Man RULED by FEARS and VICES and SINS – Named HEROD

HEROD Family Name – Ancient Franchise for SEX, SCANDAL, SURPRISES

HERODs were the ANCIENT KARDASHIANS

Confusion several Named HEROD in Bible – FAMILY Name & a TITLE

British Even Named a Big Department Store in LONDON after Them - ???

Herod the Great – Distant Descendent of ESAU, Idumean, appointed by ROME

Known for GREAT Terrible Deeds: ORDERED baby boys SLAIN in Bethlehem

H. the Great > 10 wives – Herod Antipas from 4th Wife > Total of 14 Children

Herod’s Court filled with INTRIGUE, JEALOUSY, and ASSASINATION

Herod’s SUSPICION led him to Kill – even own son whom he feared as Rival

“It was safer to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son” Popular Saying from the Time

1. Heartless King

a. Conflicted v. 1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus

NOBODY called this HEROD GREAT

Called “king” v. 9 - Actually **Tetrarch** of Galilee – *tetra* Greek for “four”

Kingdom of Herod the Great divided into 4 - “a ruler of 1/4 Herod’s kingdom”

Tetrarch 's territory incl. Galilee & Perea – areas where John & Jesus Preached
Herod Antipas ruled 30+ yrs, Fortress of Machaerus, 10 kms NE of Dead Sea

v. 2 and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”

His TITLE was King of Jews, but did NOT have True Faith in GOD of ISRAEL

Herod was a Sadducee; Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection.

But Herod's Guilty Conscience corrected his BAD Theology

John's Execution was Outrage by Roman as well as by Jewish Law

Herod's knowledge of Wrong caused him to FEAR John CAME Back to life

The voice of conscience is a powerful voice, and it can be the voice of God to those who will listen.
Warren Wiersbe

Good sign that his Conscience was NOT YET completely SEARED by SIN
Conscience – like Thermostat – Supposed to RESTRAINT Heat of Sinful Nature
Broken THERMOSTAT on AC – Set Numbers LOWER, Temp still goes Higher

PEOPLE who REJECT God's Truth still know this is GOD'S WORLD

Now call it FATE or CHANCE maybe LUCK – Something Bigger than THEM
Have Sense its Moral Universe things cannot Go Well for Evildoers > KARMA
Many follow Horoscopes, Birth Signs, Tea Leaves, Wisdom of World-Wide Web

When people stop believing in God, they do not believe in nothing. They believe anything.
James Boice

v. 5 And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.

Herod actually Wanted to Kill John > Would have Done it > Afraid of People

Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. Mark 6.20

John was courageous, but Herod was Kitty cat

HEROD More concerned for his Reputation - than doing what was RIGHT
Too Afraid to Uphold the Moral Law - was his Duty Ruler of Nation of ISRAEL

b. Cunning

v. 3 For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife

Herod ANTIPAS 1st Wife – ARAB Princess / Herodias 1st married Herod Philip
Israel SHOCKED - Married Herod asked to marry Already Married Herodias

MORE SHOCKING – Divorced their SPOUSES and DID IT!

Some SERIOUS INBREEDING was Going On

Herod's NIECE and SISTER-in-LAW becomes his WIFE

v. 6 But when Herod's birthday came...

Herodias' Opportunity for REVENGE came > Herod's Birthday Bash

Only 2 Birthday Parties in Bible – Pharaoh & Herod – both turn out BAD

Herodias sent her daughter by Herod Philip, 1st husband, to Dance before Herod

DANCING Girl – SALOME – Herod Antipas' 12 or 13 yr old STEP-Daughter

Highly Improper for Young Girl of her Class to Dance in such a Setting

Women who Performed at All-Male Parties, were Slaves NOT PRINCESSES

Sensual Nature of Dance is DISCREETLY hinted at by Matthew

v. 6 the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod

By this TIME the BOYS were Surely Throwing Back the Brew – bit BUZZED
Herodias understood Men – Seized her Chance – Throws Daughter to WOLVES

v. 7 so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

Promise that was WAY to Big for a SIMPLE TETRARCH to Keep

But at this Bawdy Birthday Bash with Boys – Herod sees self as Real KING

Herod is undone by his own sensuality. Overwhelmed by the sensual in the first place, he seduces his brother's wife. Now amid the sensual pleasures of a party, overcome again by a pleasurable woman – this time the dancing daughter of his illegally gotten wife – he plunges into excess. Frederick Dale Bruner

c. Caved In - Dance pleased Herod – Makes Promise of Pompous Extravagance

Foolish Vow - Should Never have Made – Now THINKS he's forced to Keep it

vs. 9-11 And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

Prompted by Bitter Mother – Promise now very PAINFUL to Keep

Forced to PLATTER the Head of a PROPHET even he Knows is from GOD

Too weak to Admit his Mistake of FOOLISH PROMISE to Salome

Too Frightened of his Wife's Tantrums if he Stood Down and Stood UP to HER

Saving FACE became MORE IMPORTANT than Saving his SOUL

So died the Last OT Prophet – The Old Age ends in Violence

Stage set for Unfolding of New Covenant of God's Grace in Jesus Christ

New Covenant will NOT Come without ANOTHER Violent, Senseless DEATH

Herod was no psychopath. He was just an ordinary guy who made one small foolish step after another – a small step toward a woman who was not his wife, another step behind his brother’s back, a momentary fit of passion at a birthday party, and the next thing you know there’s John’s head staring at you...

Douglas Sean O’Donnell

Story: Sad Glimpse into High Life of Antiquity, Not Much has Changed Today!

Salome, DANCING HOTTIE Corrupted at Young Age by her Evil Mother

Herodias, SCORNED & Eager to EVEN the SCORE, Wicked, Vengeful Woman

The sensuous friends of Herod. PARTY ANIMALS

Herod with his evil conscience. COWARDLY KING

Herod took a firm stand on wrong things, but he was weak on right things.

James Boice

Against them all is John the Baptist - Upright, Outspoken, and Courageous

2. Headless Prophet

a. Clear v 4 John had been saying to him **“It is not lawful for you to have her”**

Everybody KNEW this FAMILY Drama – Talk of the TOWN

People watched this BEFORE they started watching REALITY TV

Herodias parted from a living husband to marry her husband’s brother and flout the way of our fathers.

Josephus, *Antiquities*

Public Criticism of Herod’s 2nd Marriage – throwing GAS on Serious FIRE

John’s Denouncing Herod for his Immoral Behavior - probably Not his Divorce

Allowed under both Jewish and Roman law – but NOT God’s LAW

BIGGER Problem - Herod’s Incestuous 2nd marriage

Herodias was Herod’s NIECE and Sister-in-Law

If a man takes his brother’s wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless.

Leviticus 20.21

b. Consistent v. 4 because John had been saying to him...

John was continually speaking out against it - Imperfect Tense of verb "to say"

v. 4 because John *had been saying to him*, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

HEARD So CLEARLY and CONSISTENTLY Voice of John Ringing in Head

v. 2 he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead..."

Will NOT Change World if we DENY our Conscience like HEROD

Must be TRUE to Conscience like Prisoner Paul declared to Governor FELIX

I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. Acts 24.14-16

We must recognize that just as great rivers have a very small source, so great movements of history often start in a single moment with an obscure thought, word or action: a teenage woman bears her firstborn son in the backwater of a mighty empire and names him Jesus; an unknown German monk, Martin Luther, nails his ninety-five theses to the door of a church building; an almost coincidental sharing of an office introduces Nelson Mandela to politics in South Africa. Nowhere is this principle of life more fully demonstrated than in the growth and development of the kingdom of heaven. Joe Kapolyo

c. Courageous - John was FEARLESS before HEROD the TETRARCH

EVEN MORE COURAGE Needed to FACE – Herodias the SCORNED Woman

Perhaps Herod brought John to Fortress to Hear Him

Stunned by John's Forthright Denunciation of Marriage - kept him in Prison

Royal Couple SHAMED – soon Whole Palace learned about John's SCOLDING

Understand why Herodias Hated John – perhaps urging the king to kill John

v. 8 *Prompted by her mother*, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”

HERODIAS Yanking Herod’s CHAIN Long Enough to get what she Wanted

v. 12 his disciples came and took the body and buried it

The tyrant dies and his rule ends, the martyr dies and his rule begins. Soren Kierkegaard

3. Following King Jesus with Heart and Head

a. Repent and Be Saved – John NOBLE Servant thru Gospel of Matthew

From Introduction to his End – Consistently Preached Repentance...

John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3.1,2

Repentance is NOT a ONE Time Only Experience – We keep on Sinning

Repentance is for REALLY BAD People > Bible says that’s who WE ARE!

Every Day we must PLEAD the Blood of Jesus and Power of the Holy Spirit

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when he said ‘Repent,’ willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance. Martin Luther, 1st of 95 Theses

REPENTANCE is More Than Remorse – HEROD had REMORSE

He was REALLY SORRY! He cried Crocodile TEARS for all Consequences

Herod Divorced 1st Wife to for Herodias > created Explosive Political Situation

Led to a WAR between Herod and Herodias’ Husband / His Brother

HEROD lost PRESTIGE and POWER – LATER Armies defeated by ARABS

EXILED 1st to GAUL – then SPAIN - where he DIED

Difference between GODLY Sorrow and WORLDLY Sorrow

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 2 Corinthians 7.8-11

Paul glad Corinthians REPENTED recv'd Strong Letter – 1 Cor? Another?

WORLDLY Sorrow – because you got CAUGHT you are ASHAMED

GODLY Sorrow– because you KILLED X, Realize He was Shamed for You

Worldly Sorrow: Cry for CONSEQUENCES / Godly Sorrow leads Repentance

Godly Sorrow Realize NO BETTER than Anyone – All Need Mercy & Grace

John preached REPENTANCE because HE Needed and Found MERCY thru IT

John was MORE Afraid FOR Herod than OF Herod

John knew he was going to Heaven – he wanted Herod & Herodias to Join him

When we speak about our FALLEN Leaders is our Heart Loving them?

Do we REJOICE that they are on the Road to HELL? Want them to be Saved?

Before we can CALL Anyone Else OUT on THEIR SIN we need to Face Ours

FORNICATION > Kids will be Kids / Homosexual > CALL the ELDERS

MUSLIM Comes to Church – Take Out to Lunch and SHARE

HOMOSEXUAL Comes to Church, We Want to WASH Our Hands Afterward

b. Rebuke Sin

C.S. Lewis told the story of two neighbors each of whom had divorced their spouses and then married each other. Another neighbor, with whom he was discussing the situation, replied "**they have a right to happiness.**" Lewis noted that this neighbor would not say the same thing of a ruthless businessman who was happy when he made money by means fair or foul. Nor would she say the same thing about an alcoholic who was happy when he drank. The happiness his neighbor was referring to was a right to "sexual happiness," = according to Lewis, meant freedom to act on our sexual impulses without restraint. And it doesn't matter if such restraint is good for us or for the society as a whole.

"if we establish a right to sexual happiness which supersedes all the ordinary rules of behavior, we do so not because of what our passion shows itself to be in experience, but because of what it professes to be while we are in the grip of it."

C.S. Lewis, "We Have No Right to Happiness"

Wrote over 50 years ago – Even then Sexual Happiness is HIGHEST Pleasure Society so DRUNK with Sexual Sin – Lost All Perspective – God FORGOTTEN

Friend tells us MOVED In with Boyfriend – Hetero or Homo "*Happy for you!*"

DARE Not Question whether that Relationship is BEST for Them?

CERTAINLY Never DARE ask WHAT DOES GOD Think about their Choice?

John knew what he was DOING in Accepting INVITATION to Herod's Palace
He was WELL AWARE that might Leave being CARRIED Out in BODY BAG

Charles Colson worked for Richard Nixon when he was president of USA

Sometimes led Guests into Oval Office – to Meet President Face to Face

As waited in Outer Room – Rehearse BOLD Speech – Cut Mr. Nixon DOWN

Stately Door swung open, aide announcing, 'The president will see you'

Step on the Plush Blue Carpet > Great Seal of the United States

Stand before MOST Powerful Leader on the PLANET

Invariably, the lions of the waiting room became the lambs of the Oval Office.

Charles Colson

John the Baptist NOT FEAR Mere Man – Stood in Presence of LIVING GOD

NOTICE John did not just Stand in Temple and preach against Sins of PALACE

Preachers stand behind PULPITS > Rebuke POLITICIANS from Safe Distance

Plush Blue Carpet of PALACE did NOT Silence John

NOTICE Carefully – THAT Sermon was to HEROD’S Face

Matthew 18 – FACE the Person before you FACEBOOK the Person

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Matthew 18.15-17

If you have Great Burden for Leaders – Get on Plane and Visit – or Subway

REBUKE that will lead to REPENTANCE best comes out of a RELATIONSHIP

Read Articles on Internet News – Scroll Down to Comments – VERY Sad

Professing Christian doing DRIVE BY SHOOTING to Pagans and SINNERS

Jesus called people SINNERS when he SAT at their DINNER Table

If people know you CARE for them, they will LISTEN (maybe not Agree) YOU

"If lost sinners will not listen you speak, they cannot prevent your praying. Do they laugh at your exhortations? They cannot disturb you at your prayers. Are they far away so you cannot reach them? Your prayers can reach them. Have they declared that they will never listen to you again, or see your face? Never mind, God has a voice which they must hear. Speak to him and He will make them feel. Though they now treat you despitefully, rendering evil for your good, follow them with your prayers. Never let them perish for lack of your supplications."
 Charles Spurgeon

c. Rejoice in Suffering

We SEE the BEATITUDES PERSONIFIED in the Life of John the Baptist

“Blessed are the poor in spirit – mourn – meek - hunger and thirst for righteousness – merciful - pure in heart – peacemakers -
 persecuted for righteousness’ sake....

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
 Matthew 5.11,12

Suffering Not an Easy Thing to EMBRACE – We want to RUN from CROSS
 Seems MASOCHISTIC to TELL people to REJOICE in their SUFFERINGS!

Jesus and his Disciples were going to MEET their OWN VIOLENT Deaths

Suffering became So Frequent in Early Church – One of Leaders said...

The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.
 Tertullian, *Apology*

Rejoicing in Suffering is NOT to ROMANTICIZE it – it is BITTER & HARD

John was DECAPITATED in Some STINKY DUNGEON – No Harps Playing

Starring on ISIS VIRAL VIDEO, Wearing Cool Orange Jump Suit DREADFUL

No better than ISLAMIC Suicide Bombers if IDEALIZE Suffering for JESUS

1985 Campus Crusade GLOBAL Outreach - Explo '85

Speaking Team in UGANDA w/ John Wilson – Oil Exec / Anglican Evangelist

Driving away from Meetings John's car Stopped at Gunpoint by BANDITS

IN Car – Wife, Mother, Daughter – did Not want Trouble GOT OUT

John stood in Suit / Clerical Collar street on Kampala– KEYS to GUN Men

Shot him DEAD in Full View of Family – Got in CAR and DROVE Away

How you to REJOICE in this? Dozens of John Wilson's killed for X Daily!

More we study the Gospels, more Profound Arrangement of Material Revealed

From chaps. 14–17 see what some call **“The Withdrawal of the King”**

Begins with Death of John the Baptist - Not in Correct sequence historically

John was probably killed about a year before this, in A.D. 29

Change in Jesus' Teaching - Public Preaching > emph Disciples in Private

ZGC Sundays – Proclaim to ALL / Sm Gps, Tuesdays – More Serious Disciples

Important Transition > v. 12 “and they went and told Jesus”

v. 13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him

Course of CROSS is Set > Jesus focus' Teach Privately leaders left Behind

JESUS is One Character in Background of Story

In Final Analysis – Only REAL Contrast in Story is Not between Herod and John

Degrees of Difference between Herod and John – BROTHERS in SIN

We have a BROTHER who NEVER SINNED – King who is Forever Righteous

One whom John the Baptist SERVED and SUFFERED For

KING who Reigns in HOLINESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and TRUTH

One who will Suffer and Die at hands of CORRUPT Politician as John did

Herod Petty king, but he looked kingly. Jesus King of kings looked like Peasant.

Herod did what those in Power Do - used his Power to Preserve his Power

But in the End he Lost his Power and Died a Pauper's Death

King Jesus set Aside His Power to Die for His People - Rules in Glory Forever

.we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us...God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Romans 5.3-9

Almighty God, by whose providence thy servant, John the Baptist, was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare thy way for thy Son our Saviour, by preaching repentance, make us to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake.

Thomas Cranmer, Collect for the Nativity of John the Baptist, 1549

Matthew 14.¹ At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus,² and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”³ For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,⁴ because John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”⁵ And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.⁶ But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,⁷ so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”⁹ And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.¹⁰ He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,¹¹ and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.¹² And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.