



**‘Now!’ Sermon Series**

Sermon #22

**‘The Cost of Telling the Truth!’**

**Mark 6:14-29**

Sunday, September 29th, 2024

**Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:**

- Last week you may remember I preached a sermon where I ran around the pulpit with an arrow made out of card board.
  - **Let me remind you, I didn’t do that for any old reason, but to show us as a congregation that we needed to live a SENT life and not a SEATED life.**
- **I preached a sermon last week entitled ‘Saved to be Sent!’ from Mark 6:7-13.**
  - I asked the question: **How do we as saved people allow Jesus to send us out to do His**

*work just as He sent His disciples out in this text?*

- **Truth #1: Lean into His Authority. (V. 7)**
- **Truth #2: Leave your personal Accommodations behind. (V. 8-9)**
- **Truth #3: Linger as long as You’re Accepted. (V. 10-11)**
- **Truth #4: Listen to Your Assignment. (V. 12-13)**
  - Based on last week’s sermon, are you living a SENT life or a SEATED life?
- If you are living a SENT life are you doing so by following the 4 truths we studied last week...

**‘The Cost of Telling the Truth!’**

**Mark 6:14-29**

**Sermon in a Sentence:**

***In this horrific text that describes the narrative of John the Baptist’s gruesome execution, we find the Cost of Telling the Truth when we see the Fear of Non-Believers, the Flashback that is noticed, and the Folly that is Nasty.***

**Intro:**

- This morning we looked at a gruesome passage.
  - **In the early sermons of Mark’s Gospel, we looked at and briefly studied the life and ministry of John the Baptist.**

- *In Israel, John the Baptist was a highly regarded prophet and forerunner of Christ at this time.*
  - Though, many of the Jews did not listen nor heed his message.
- *This morning's text of scripture is not on my top 25 lists of 'Favorite Texts to Preach'. Not because I don't value the truth of God found in these verses, but because it breaks my heart.*
  - In this text we find scandal, scrutiny, and sadness.
- *This morning we get a front row seat of realizing that the culture does not like Christians, at all, and will often do anything that they can to silence Christians, even to the point of death.*
  - The death of John the Baptist that is explained in the text this morning in the form of a flashback, is one of three gruesome deaths by leaders of the NT Church by the Romans.
    - #1: Christ's Crucifixion.
    - #2: Stephen's Stoning.
    - #3: John's Beheading.
- *Unlike our brothers and sisters who are halfway across the world this morning, you and I don't truly understand persecution like we will see in the coming years.*

- *I do want to tell you this morning that if you truly follow Christ the way that the scriptures direct us to, it will cost you something.*
  - If your Christian life doesn't cost you anything right now? Are you truly living the Christian life?
    - *When you truly live a sold out life for Christ, it WILL cost you something.*
      - Time. Finances. Lifestyle Habits. Friendships. And many other things...
- *Last week I talked about how we must be SENT and not SEATED.*
  - Last week I gave you four ways from the text that you can live sent. This morning, I want to show you from the text the cost of living a SENT life.
    - *But can I tell you, that it is worth it?*
- *How can we know that the COST of following Jesus is going to be worth it?*
  - Jesus addresses this later in Mark's Gospel, in Mark 10:29-30...
    - 'Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and

lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.’

- *The cost of following Jesus may cause you to lose your life or even your head, in our text this morning...*
  - *But more importantly, I pray that you and I will lose our self-centered and selfish hearts, and allow Christ to truly change our hearts to reflect His...*

*\*Read Mark 6:14-29\**

#### **Question to Ask:**

*How does the life and ministry of John the Baptist show us the cost of living a SENT life and always telling the truth?*

#### **Point 1: *The Fear of Non-Believers. (V. 14-16)***

- As we’ve seen all throughout Mark’s Gospel, the works and deeds of Jesus continue to spread all throughout the region.
  - *Which only makes sense, that ‘King Herod’ (Mark sarcastically calls him king, because he really wasn’t one), hears about Jesus and has quite a ‘guilty’ reaction.*
  - *It is interesting that Herod just now takes notice of Jesus and His ministry when Christ had already been serving for several years.*
    - Herod’s palace at the time was in the city of Tiberias and according to scripture, Jesus never visited that city.

■ *To the Jewish people, the city of Tiberias was viewed as unclean due to the fact it was built upon a graveyard.*

- So many Jews refused to go there.
- Either way, Herod finds out about Jesus, and it causes him to be afraid.
  - *He does not seek to kill Jesus at this time, instead, he is afraid of Jesus and the power of His followers due to the guilty conscience that he has for killing John the Baptist...*
    - It’s true, the guilty dog always barks the loudest.
  - *As we look at the fear that a non-believer often has towards Christ followers, we must look at 3 attributes that led to this fear...*
- **Context of Herod Antipas. (V. 14a)**
  - ‘King Herod heard of it,’
  - As I mentioned a moment ago, I feel that Mark is using sarcasm here.
    - *Because Herod Antipas was not a king, his father was, but not him.*
  - *Herod Antipas is one of many sons of Herod the Great.*
    - Herod the Great was the ruler who wanted Jesus killed so ordered that many male baby boys be killed.

- ***Herod Antipas was the Tetrarch of the territories of Galilee and Perea.***
  - A **Tetrarch** by definition was a political position in the early Roman Empire. It was a designated size of a territory (usually a fourth), and it depended on the Roman authorities.
    - ***So, Herod Antipas did not have a lot of power.***
    - Like his father though, he was a builder, having oversaw construction for the city of Tiberias and Sepphoris along the sea of Galilee.
- ***Herod Antipas is the only person in scripture that Jesus would refer to as an animal...***
  - ‘And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.’ Luke 13:32
- ***In A.D. 39, Herod Antipas and his wife, Herodias, would be exiled away from Rome due to his demanding of the title ‘King’.***
  - The context as to who this man is, is very important.
- ***Communication of Jesus spreads. (V. 14b-15)***
  - ‘for Jesus’<sup>[a]</sup> name had become known. Some<sup>[b]</sup> said, “John the Baptist<sup>[c]</sup> has been raised from

the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” **15** But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

- ***Even in this time period without technology, word traveled fast and this is no exception when it came to Christ and the apostles and the work that they did.***
  - ***It’s obvious based on how Mark words this verse that they were having discussions about who Jesus was in the palace at Tiberias.***
  - Notice that they have three different opinions on who Jesus might be, but none of them are the right one.
    - ***#1:*** He is John the Baptist raised from the dead.
    - ***#2:*** He is Elijah.
    - ***#3:*** He is a prophet like those of years gone by.
- ***Non-believers will have kinds of opinions on who Jesus is until they actually come to know Him.***
  - Which is why it’s important we tell them.
- Notice that Herod nor his cabinet deny the works of God, ***they just get the source wrong.***
  - Isn’t this so similar to our time and culture today?

- ***Cold Fear enters Herod's mind. (V. 16)***
  - 'But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."
  - Herod thinks that Jesus is John the Baptist who came back from the dead.
    - ***Verse 16 in the Greek text gives the implication that Herod was disturbed and even 'haunted' from his actions to kill John the Baptist, which Mark is about to use a flashback to take us back to that event.***
  - ***While we know that Jesus was not John the Baptist raised from the dead, Jesus was the Messiah and John the Baptist went to be in the presence of the Lord in Heaven.***
    - But do you remember what Jesus said about His cousin John in ***Matthew 11:11***?
      - 'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.' Matthew 11:11
  - Dr. Daniel Aiken said ***'John was a man of great courage and moral fiber. Herod was not. John loved God and boldly proclaimed His Word. Herod did not. John denounced sin and called people to repentance and a radical change in life. Herod murdered an innocent man, a***

***prophet of God. It haunted him, and rightly so. John's blood was on his hands.'***

- Non-Believers will often fear believers...

**Point 2: *The Flashback is Noticed. (V. 17-20)***

- Now, Mark takes us into the events and the words that were spoken, that led to John's head being served on a platter.
  - ***Without defining all the sins that will come from this situation due to the audience we have in here today (children), I will tell you that between Herod and Herodias, it was sin on steroids.***
    - A main theological truth that you and I find here in the text, is that non-believers will be offended when we speak the truth according to God's Word (which John the Baptist did), but that does not mean we stop speaking the truth.
- ***Scandal. (V. 17)***
  - 'For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her.'
  - ***This entire verse reveals a scandal that was deeply entrenched in this family.***
    - So, Herod Antipas noticed his niece, who at the time was married to his half brother, Herod Philip.

- So, long story short, he convinced her to leave her husband (his brother!), and he also got rid of his wife.
  - ***The book of Leviticus would be the scriptural basis with which John the Baptist would speak out against these actions:***
    - ‘You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.’ Leviticus 18:16
    - ‘If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity.[a] He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.’ Leviticus 20:21
  - ***What John the Baptist shows us here, is that when there is impurity in our government, leaders, family members, coworkers, we are not to talk about their sin, we are to go to them and confront them with their sin.***
    - John the Baptist is a man of God and true men of God speak when sin is blatantly obvious and upfront.
- ***Speaking Out. (V. 18)***
  - ‘For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.”’
  - John the Baptist spoke out against this sin, and when he decided to do this, he put a big target on his back.
    - ***As we continue in our text this morning, we will continue to see that***

***Herodias is a very evil woman who can't stand to be told the truth.***

- ***There are people like that in our culture today.***
  - The phrase ‘had been telling’ is used here to indicate that John spoke to Herod about this multiple times.
    - ***Verses 19-20 will indicated that Herod respected John and this evident in the fact that John called out his sin multiple times on multiple occasions and he didn't kill him.***
    - John the Baptist had to know that was a possibility.
  - ***I'm sure John the Baptist desired that Herod would repent and seek to make things right... He was getting close, until Herodias got wind of it and pressured her husband to arrest John the Baptist...***
    - ***As a Christian you and I should be like John the Baptist in the sense that we dislike sin so much that we are constantly speaking out against it...***
  - What we have here this morning is a first-century Jezebel who manipulates her weak husband.
    - ***As a side not, most men (even Christian men) in our culture today act more like***

*Herod Antipas (weak) instead of John the Baptist (strong).*

- There's a scandal, there's speaking out, and for a brief time, there's safety in confinement...
- **Safety, for now. (V. 19-20)**
  - 'And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, **20** for 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.'
  - While Herod feared John, he was also fascinated with him.
    - **This is probably the first time in Herod Antipas life that someone was bold enough to tell him 'no' and to tell him what he was doing was wrong.**
    - **So while he was perplexed, he wanted to keep John the baptist alive, even though his wife wanted him dead. For now, they compromise and he keeps John safe by throwing him in prison.**
  - Notice that verse 19 says that Herodias had a grudge against him (John the Baptist).
    - **If you have a grudge against someone, and you do not deal with it properly, it will haunt and hurt you to point where you will harm innocent people**

*(physically, spiritually, and emotionally).*

- While you may think and feel that you're entitled to hold a grudge, may I remind you the only person that would be entitled to hold a grudge against all humanity, didn't know. He went to the Cross and died for you and me.
    - 'but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' Romans 5:8
  - So far this morning, we've seen the fear of non-believers, and the start of the flashback, but now the Folly is about to get downright nasty.
- Point 3: The Folly is Nasty. (V. 21-29)**
- As we've already seen in the text this morning, Herod was an evil man.
    - **He was the son of an evil man, and that evilness continued in him and in his reign as king.**
  - **As Gruesome as these verses are, as we concentrate on the Folly of Herod, we must be reminded that we can't be surprised when lost people act, well, lost!**
    - The ways and actions of those who are lost and do not know Christ are downright nasty.
      - **So, when we come to verses such as these in God's Word it should motivate us to want to live a SENT lifestyle no matter what kind of persecution we may be facing.**

- In these verses, I believe there are **4** things that we need to consider when it comes to the Nasty Folly of Herod.
- ***Seemingly Normal Birthday Celebration. (V. 21-22)***
  - ‘But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. **22** For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.”
    - ***‘But an opportunity came’***
      - Especially with those who are non-believers, satan loves it when an opportunity comes around for him to be able to plant seeds of evilness and hatred towards God’s people.
  - ***As far as Roman/Pagan standards go, this Birthday celebration for Herod Antipas was of the norm.***
    - ***The Jews viewed Birthday celebrations as pagan festivities that they would avoid and not attend.***
  - JM described roman birthday parties in these terms ***‘Excuses for uninhibited revelry, often characterized by overindulgence, gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual deviance.’***

- I’m not making excuses and saying this kind of Birthday party is okay, but what I am saying is that it starts out as what would be normal for the times among the Roman Royalty.
- ***At these parties, they were limited to only men, and the text tells us that Herod Antipas invites three groups of men to his birthday party...***
  - ***#1: Nobles.***
    - High ranking government leaders of the Galilean region.
  - ***#2: Military Officers.***
    - These would have been the top commanders at the time in his army that were over this region (Galilee).
  - ***#3: Leading Men.***
    - These men would be the wealthy and prominent men in the community such as business owners and city officials.
- The verbs in the greek text that appear in verse 22, give the idea that this narrative is about to get darker, quick.
  - ***Remember, that back in verse 19, we are told that Herodias held a grudge against John the Baptist because he***





- So, to not fulfill the oath would be to put his authority and reputation on the line.
- *I find it interesting, the similarities in this situation, with Herod Antipas and Salome, between King Xerxes and Queen Esther which is found in Esther 5:3, Esther 5 and Esther 7:2, that ultimately led to the unraveling of Haman's evil plan...*
  - *This morning, the promise Herod Antipas made is revealing Herodia's evil plot...*
- *She Runs back to the Evil Source. (V. 24-25)*
  - ‘And she went out and said to her mother, “For what should I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.” **25** And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”
  - *Salome is not to blame in this situation. She was directed by her mother to do a task, if she doesn't do it, her own life is at risk.*
    - *The source of this evilness is and has been throughout this passage, Herodias.*
  - *The reason for all of this is finally revealed... 'The head of John the Baptist'*
- I'm sure her mother told her to go quickly before her step father might sober up and change his mind.
      - But, this is obviously not what would happen...
- *Sad and Spliness King. (V. 26-29)*
  - ‘And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. **27** And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's<sup>[d]</sup> head. He went and beheaded him in the prison **28** and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. **29** When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.’
  - The damage has been done.
  - *The King had already made the oath, and now he had to follow through with what had already been promised.*
  - *\*Word Study\**
    - In verse 26 specifically in the greek text, it seems clear and obvious that the request caught Herod off guard.
    - The phrase ‘exceedingly sorry’ comes from the greek word *‘Perilupos’* **περίλυπος** which literally means *grieved all around, and intensely sad.*

- *The reason he is sad, is the same reason that he did not allow his wife to have John the Baptist killed in the first place...*
  - ‘for 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
- *While Herod may have genuinely been sorry, it did not stop him from going through with the actions that had been requested of him.*
  - *Herod was more upset with displeasing his wife and did not want to seem ‘weak’ in front of his guests.*
    - Herod’s feeling of being ‘sorry’ didn’t change anything in his heart...
    - ‘For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.’ 2nd Corinthians 7:10
- *Dr. Daniel Aiken said ‘Herod feared displeasing his wife and losing face with man more than he feared God. Pride took him down, just like it did satan and Adam. Herodias feared and hated John because he was right and she knew it.’*

- *The culture placed John the Baptist’s head on a platter literally. We don’t need to be surprised when the culture seeks to do that to you and I today.*
- *I believe that like Major John Andre in the American revolution (on the British side), that John the Baptist met his fate like a Brave Man.*
  - *John the Baptist knew and understood that proclaiming God’s Word could result in death.*
  - This is something you and I may be foreign to, but we need to go ahead and get used to it.

#### Conclusion:

- On March 2nd of 2011, there was a 42-year-old man by the name of Shahbaz Bhatti who was the only Christian that was serving on Pakistan’s cabinet.
  - He was murdered brutally when gunmen came in and sprayed his body with multiple bullets.
- *Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the murder and released the following statement...*
  - *‘(The attack) was a fitting lesson for the world of infidelity, the crusaders, the Jews and their aides. This is the fitting end of the accursed one which will serve as an example to others. And now with the blessing and aid of Allah, the mujahedeen will send all of you, one by one to hell.’*

- ***Shahbaz Bhatti knew the dangers he faced following Jesus in a government where that was not acceptable.***
  - Several months before his death, it was said that Bhatti told his friends and family that he wanted to share his belief in Christ and that he was willing to die at anytime, knowing that Christ would get the honor and the Glory.
- ***John the Baptist lost his life for speaking the truth.***
  - Many brothers and sisters will be rewarded in Heaven because they died speaking and living the truth of the Gospel.
  - ***The Gospel will cost you something if you truly believe and live it.***
    - No, it may not cost you your life, but it may cost you your life.
- You have to decide if the Gospel you say you believe in and the God you say you trust, is willing to die for.
  - ***Because if He's enough to die for, then He'll be enough for you to live for now and change your ways to be like Him.***
- **Point 1: *The Fear of Non-Believers. (V. 14-16)***
- **Point 2: *The Flashback is Noticed. (V. 17-20)***
- **Point 3: *The Folly is Nasty. (V. 21-29)***