

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey**
TITLE: **A Story You Can't Cut Out** TEXT: **Mark 6:14-29**

HOOK- By show of hands, *WHO LOVES A GOOD SANDWICH?*
Rogers' sandwich...with apple slices! (I would have never guessed)

Mark loves a good sandwich- one story split in two, with another story in the middle.

- Jesus sends the disciples sent out- **Mark 6:7** He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs...
- The disciples return & report- **Mark 6:30** The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught.
- Sandwiched between these two narratives is what seems like an odd interruption-
Did you know, only two passages in Mark are not directly about Jesus!
Both are about John the Baptist- His introduction in Chapter 1, and here, his death

Read **Mark 6:14-29**

This is not a random interruption— there is a significant theological emphasis embedded into the center story that will help you fully comprehend the exterior narratives.

In other words.... it's the key that unlocks the meaning of the outer stories.

Question for us: **What does John the Baptists' death teach us about being disciples of Jesus?**

Mark 6:14-16 King Herod heard about it, because Jesus's name had become well known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that's why miraculous powers are at work in him."
¹⁵ But others said, "He's Elijah." Still others said, "He's a prophet, like one of the prophets from long ago."
¹⁶ When Herod heard of it, he said, "John, the one I beheaded, has been raised!"

Throughout the book this has been a major theme

Mark 4:41 And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

People are talking-

"He's John"- Herod heard about Jesus but made no effort to seek Him...why?

He was haunted by his sin (John's death).

Sin that goes unrepentant will haunt you (if you're someone hiding sin, you know this)

"He's Elijah"- Of all the different ideas of the Messiah the Jews had, the most popular was that He would come as a military King who would lead the Jewish people not only to freedom, but to revolution.

In this view, it was essential that before the Messiah came, Elijah, the great prophet, would first return to announce the coming of the Messiah (**Malachi 4:5**).

According to God, Elijah has already come, which means the Messiah is already here-

The angel Gabriel in predicting John the Baptist's birth-

Luke 1:17 And he will go before him **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

Jesus also proclaimed the Spirit of Elijah already came-

Matthew 11:13-14 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until **John**. ¹⁴ And if you're willing to accept it, **he is the Elijah who is to come**.

This is the verdict of someone who wants Jesus only to realize *their* own ambitions.

He's not someone they can follow, He's someone they can use.

“He’s a prophet” - For over 400 years no prophet had spoken on behalf of God (‘the silent period’)

Jesus not only brought the voice and message of God, but the power and presence of God.

These people are not too far off from believing, but they must make the leap that Jesus is not less than a prophet, but He is exceedingly far more than that.

Application: **The Question Everyone Must Answer: *Who is Jesus?***

You must do something with Jesus—His works and His message confront you.

Ignoring Him is not an option.

Mark 6:17-20 For Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and to chain him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. ¹⁸ John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” ¹⁹ So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing he was a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him he would be very perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him.

Context:

- Herod ‘Antipas’— son of Herod the Great. When his father died, Emperor Augustus split up the kingdom amongst 4 of the sons.
 - Not a king in the actual sense. Matthew and Luke refer to him as Herod the *Tetrarch*.
 - He tried to get the title & was eventually banished for that (‘king’ likely used sarcastically by Mark).
 - He divorced his wife (daughter of the king of the bordering kingdom- this led to a war he lost) , and married his brother's wife (also his niece). This guy didn't respect Jewish custom or religion-

Leviticus 20:21 If a man marries his brother's wife, it is impurity...

- Herodias' father (Herod Antipas' half-brother) was killed by her grandfather (Herod the Great), She had divorced her previous husband to move up the ladder of society, so she hated John

John had publicly been calling Herod out for this

Herod loved to hear John preach... but never changed.

- Curious but not committed.
- Often stirred but never surrendered

How can someone get so close and yet never make the leap of repentance or faith?

Herod refused to give up Herodias (Let his Lust, Pride, Stubbornness control him)

He wanted to keep Herodias and John, and maybe he could juggle & keep them both

JC Ryle writes, “*Let us often look within and make sure that there is no darling lust or pet transgression which, Herodias-like, is murdering our souls.*”

Application: Listening Without Repenting is a Devilish Trap

What’s your ‘Herodias’—your one sin, habit, or idol that keeps you from following Jesus fully?
Whatever is keeping you from surrendering to Jesus is not worth it.

Herod’s unwillingness to repent sets the stage for a moment when sin’s bill comes due.

Mark 6:21-26 An opportune time came on his birthday, when Herod gave a banquet for his nobles, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee. ²²When Herodias’s own daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I’ll give it to you.” ²³He promised her with an oath: “Whatever you ask me I will give you, up to half my kingdom.” ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” “John the Baptist’s head,” she said. ²⁵At once she hurried to the king and said, “I want you to give me John the Baptist’s head on a platter immediately.” ²⁶Although the king was deeply distressed, because of his oaths and the guests he did not want to refuse her.

3 lessons I’d like to point out:

- **On parenting-** Think of Herodias’ daughter- dancing erotically in front of a room of drunken men and then asking for the death of a righteous man. *How did she get here?*
She was raised to model her mother, for better or worse.

Parents, you are shaping your kids every day-

What are my words & example shaping my children to become?

My parents would tell us growing up, “God let us borrow you”-

What if we raised our children as if they were God’s not ours? (we treat other people’s kids different)

Would you speak to them differently, treat them differently, teach them differently, spend time with them differently, discipline them differently?

- **On marriage-** *MEN:* chose a bride that will build you up; if already married, help her be a helper
LADIES: You can build or tear down (your husband, your children, your home)

Women possess a divine power that will either build up or tear down their home

Proverbs 14:1 Every wise woman builds her house, but a foolish one tears it down with her own hands.

- **On Sin-**Herod’s lifestyle and choices cornered him. He can’t go back on his word now

Sin always seems like a good bargain in the moment, until it’s time to pay the bill

Sin will always end up cornering you & forcing you to pay

Mark 6:27-29 The king immediately sent for an executioner and commanded him to bring John’s head. So he went and beheaded him in prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When John’s disciples heard about it, they came and removed his corpse and placed it in a tomb.

Herodias killed John to silence anyone who called out her sin and lifestyle.

She wanted to sin in peace, without it being pointed out as sin.

But although she would never have to see or hear John again,
she would still have to one day stand before God and hear His judgment

John the Baptist, the man of the wilderness, was confined to a dungeon cell;

The one whom Jesus said was the greatest man born of woman, killed at the grudge of an evil woman.

Application: His death is a shocking reminder to us of at least two things-

- **We are called to be faithful despite the cost**

We may not be at risk of losing our heads, but what about our integrity, status, reputation

- **We should not expect this world to reward our faith, but we can expect that God will**

Be encouraged weary sufferers, we are pilgrims in this life, but our Father awaits our arrival & is ready to lavish His children- for all this world will not give you, the Father will make up for

Back to the Markan Sandwich-

How does John's death connect to the sending of the Twelve, and more directly, to us as disciples?

The Gospel cannot be silenced. The kingdom of God cannot be stopped.

One preacher was silenced but 12 took his place.

Tertullian (1st century, 'the father of Latin theology')- *"the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"*

Mark's sandwich is also contrasting two preachers-

- Both John and Jesus preached: *Repent and believe* (Mark 1:4, 1:15).
- Both were righteous, wrongly arrested, imprisoned by corrupt rulers.

Difference: John died *BECAUSE* of others' sin; Jesus died *FOR* others' sin.

What this means for us:

As followers of Jesus, we should be:

- **Bold in truth**—as John was
- **Active in faith**—as the Twelve were
- **Resilient in suffering**—as John, the disciples & Jesus proved to be

Reflect:

Where have I been—

- **Cowardly** instead of **Bold**?
- **Passive** instead of **Active**?
- **Grumbling** instead of **Resilient**?

The world may try to silence the messenger—but it can never stop the message.

Speak boldly, live faithfully, and trust God to carry His Word, and us, forward.

***CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

BULPEN-

Context: Jesus is on mission to usher in the Kingdom of God and seek and save the lost.

He then sends out His disciples in two's and gives them similar instructions that God gave the Israelites when they fled Egypt and journeyed to the promised land, so that on their journey, they would be dependent on God to provide every step of the way.

News of the work they are doing gets to the palace.

V14 Jesus' name is well known in our society, but what exactly do people know of Jesus

Mark 8:27-29 Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

²⁸ They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

Herod hears about Jesus, acknowledges something divine is at play (thinks he may be John resurrected), and yet makes no effort to go and find out more about Him

Herod drunkenly shows off his power and royalty, though he himself is a puppet king; by contrast Jesus gave the true power of the kingdom to his disciples

David E Garland- *"The account of Herod's weakness, Herodias' scheming, and John's death has something to do with the mission of the disciples."*

John was the forerunner for Jesus, the opening act. His death, bracketed by the 12 disciples going out on mission as an extension of Jesus, then coming back to report to Him, point to an important truth hidden in the text: **The message of Jesus cannot, be silenced.**

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1800's Danish theologian)- *"The tyrant dies and his rule ends, the martyr dies and his rule begins"*

John the Baptist is a case study that is both and at the same time heavy yet hopeful;

Some of God's greatest servants will not receive great rewards in this world, but they will store treasure in heaven.

Elijah- Ahab- Jezebel ... John- Herod- Herodias

Matthew 11:1-15 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns. ² Now when John heard in prison what the Christ was doing, he sent a message through his disciples ³ and asked him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" ⁴ Jesus replied to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, ⁶ and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."

⁷ As these men were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who wear soft clothes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been suffering violence, and the violent have been seizing it by force. ¹³ For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you’re willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ Let anyone who has ears listen.