

**Matthew 14:1-12:** At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup> because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." <sup>5</sup> And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. <sup>6</sup> But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, <sup>7</sup> so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. <sup>8</sup> Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." <sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. <sup>10</sup> He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, <sup>11</sup> and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. <sup>12</sup> And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

**Intro:** Our text for today begins & ends with Jesus. It begins with reports about all that Jesus was doing making it all the way to the ruler of Galilee, Herod. & it ends with John the Baptist's disciples going to Jesus to tell Him about the loss of their leader who had been beheaded. It's always good to begin & end with Jesus! It's always good to go to Jesus with your pain, distress, sorrow, & loss! And our text points us to what Jesus will face: death/raised!

### **1. Herod Thinks Jesus Is John The Baptist Raised From The Dead**

**Matthew 14:1-2:** At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, <sup>2</sup> 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."

**a. We are introduced to Herod the tetrarch:** There are four rulers who bear the name "Herod" in the N. T. The Herod in our text this morning was Herod Antipas. His father was Herod the Great: Herod the Great was the Herod that ruled when Jesus was born and had all the babies two years old or younger slaughtered in Bethlehem.

This son of Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, was what's called a tetrarch (a ruler of a fourth part of a kingdom).

**James Boice:** It had come to mean only a lesser prince or governor. When his father, Herod the Great, died, his kingdom was divided and Herod Antipas was given rule over the areas of Galilee and Perea.

**b. Herod heard about Jesus Christ:** Since Jesus spoke like no one ever spoke before, & since Jesus did mighty works like no one ever did them before, He became more well known, so much so that Herod heard about Jesus.

**c. Herod believed Jesus Christ was John the Baptist raised from the dead:** John the Baptist did not perform miraculous signs: **John 10:41:** John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true. So Herod believed John had come back from the dead and was doing miracles now!

**Charles Quarles:** Unrepentant sinners are often haunted by a guilty conscience.

### **2. Herod Put John In Prison Because John Preached Biblical Purity Personally To Herod**

**Matthew 14:3-4:** For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup> because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

**a. Look at all the ways Herod & Herodias sinned:** 1) Herod sinned by unjustly divorcing his first wife: **Malachi 2:16:** "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel; **Matthew 19:4-6:** He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

2) Herod sinned by incestuously marrying his half brother's wife: **Leviticus 18:16:** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

3) Herod also sinned by shutting up God's prophet, John the Baptist, in prison: This was an unjust imprisonment! Herod did not respond to John's correction well. He was mad, he refused to listen, he refused to repent, and he was so mad that he imprisoned John. He was influenced by his wife. **(How do you respond to Biblical correction?)**

**b. John died because He proclaimed the truth:** If we love people, we will speak to them about their sin, in love.

**Bad Advice:** Don't needlessly introduce obstacles to the Gospel. Don't talk about homosexuality & abortion & sleeping/living together before you get married. Just talk about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't turn people off!

**Woman At The Well: John 4:16-18:** Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

**Rich Young Ruler: Mark 10:21:** And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." **GOSPEL!**

### **3. Herod Made Decisions Based On The Fear Of Man**

**Matthew 14:5:** And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.

Herod hated John's condemnation of him and his behavior so much that he wanted to murder John! But why wouldn't he? Because he feared the people! He was controlled by his own sinful passions, and he was controlled by the fear of man (Define). Thankfully his fear of man kept him from murder, but he had no fear of God!

Herod's actions are in such contrast to John's actions. John feared God & God alone. He feared God so much that he spoke the truth to this ruler Herod, even though he knew Herod had the power to kill him. & John kept speaking

- **Matthew 10:28:** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- **Proverbs 29:25:** The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

**Jon Bloom:** 1) Confess your fear of man. As soon as you recognize fear of man, confess it as sin to God and repent. If possible, confess it to faithful friends who will help you fight it.

2) Question your fear of man. What exactly are you afraid of and why? Do you really have good reason to fear, especially in light of Matthew 10:28? Articulating your fear often exposes it as the pathetic thing it is.

3) Courageously confront your fear of man. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Obedience calls for courage. Courage is not the absence of the emotion of fear, but the resolve to obey despite what we feel. Exercise your trust in God by stepping out in obedience. "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Trusting God is safe; fearing man is not (Proverbs 29:25). God usually teaches us this through the hard lesson of obeying in spite of feeling afraid. For then we learn to trust God's promises more than our perceptions and reach the place where "we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:6).

### **4. The Outrageous Way John Died**

**Matthew 14:6-12:** But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,<sup>7</sup> so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.<sup>8</sup> Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."<sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.<sup>10</sup> He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,<sup>11</sup> and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.<sup>12</sup> And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

**a. Herodias' daughter danced and pleased Herod so he promised her whatever she asked:** Herod was having a party for his birthday; Herodias' daughter (Herod's wife's daughter & his own step-daughter) danced for everyone, and it was very pleasing to Herod. So Herod made a foolish oath to give her whatever she wanted. She asks mom.

**b. Herodias told her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter:** She, like Herod, wanted John dead because he called out their sin, and she saw her chance here to get what she wanted – to force Herod's hand to do what she wanted. A wicked, manipulative woman – much like Jezebel.

**c. Herod didn't want to execute John yet or in these circumstances, but he does it because of the fear of man:** Fear of man kept him from executing John and fear of man caused him to execute John. He had made an oath and "because of oaths and guests" he had John beheaded. He didn't want to look bad or weak in front of others!

**d. Jesus is worthy to die for:** John died for the truth. Jesus is worth dying for. Jesus is worthy dying daily for.

**Ellen Vaughn:** Her [Elisabeth Elliot's] story conveys all the discipline and patient suffering for which she was well-known in the often-repeated stories about the violent death of her first husband. But her most noble accomplishment was not weathering that [unimaginable] loss. It was practicing - through both the high dramas and the low, dull days that constitute any human life - the daily self-death required for one's soul to flourish. It is this theme of death that gives the narrative arc of her life. This is not particularly cheerful, but if there is one empowering, paradoxical element within Elisabeth Elliot that defined her core, it was a healthy willingness to die. Again and again, if God so willed, always believing in His promise that real, robust, exhilarating life comes out of every death. (**Amy Carmichael:** What's it like to be a missionary – It's a chance to die.)

**Spurgeon:** It was well for the Baptist to go to his reward, for his work was done. He was not left to [lose his health & vigor or grieve] in solitude: the man of God left his prison for Paradise by one sudden stroke of the sword. It was a foul murder, but to [John the] Baptist it was a happy release. He was no longer in the power of Herod or Herodias: he received his crown in heaven though he had lost his head on earth.

**e. John the Baptist, though he was the greatest man born of women, was beheaded at a young age:** John was faithful! John was loved by God! God delighted in John and in his ministry. But he died young (about 30)!

**Luke 21:16-18:** You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. <sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish.

**William Cowper:** 1) God moves in a mysterious way; His wonders to perform.

He plants his footsteps in the sea; And rides upon the storm.

2) You fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break; In blessings on your head.

3) His purposes will ripen fast; Unfolding ev'ry hour.

The bud may have a bitter taste; But sweet will be the flow'r.

4) Blind unbelief is sure to err; And scan his work in vain.

God is his own interpreter; And he will make it plain.

**Romans 8:35, 37-39:** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? . . . <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**f. John's disciples came to bury John's body:** They loved their leader. They buried his body. He would rise!

**g. And John's disciples went and told Jesus:** They went to Jesus! In their pain, in their loss, in their suffering, in their unbearable grief, they went to Jesus! This is a great example! Jesus is their leader now. And that was the whole point of John's ministry – to point others to Jesus and lead people to Jesus!

**John spoke of Jesus: John 1:29:** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Jesus is a far greater prophet than John the Baptist! He is God, and when He died, He rose up from the dead!

Jesus is a far greater King than Herod! He was absolutely sexually pure, He perfectly obeyed God's law, He was sinless – He never had any personal sin to confront! And He always cared most about what God thought, and not what man thought!

And if Herod would turn from all his sin and trust in this Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, Herod could be saved! The vilest of sinners . . . . Do you know Him? Come just as you are! **GOSPEL!**

**Jesus Has The Name That Demands Fame Which We Must Die To Proclaim!**

He so lived and so spoke that His name became known  
Since then His fame has continually grown  
For He must be honored just as His Father on the throne  
He humbled Himself to the point of death all alone  
He absorbed God's wrath for sin to atone  
Yet He's alive forevermore, from the grave He's flown  
All over the world His Gospel will be sown  
Calling sinners to Himself and making them His very own!

He's the God-man with incomparable fame  
He came to heal the lame and all those afflicted with shame  
He's the Lion of God Who's good but not tame  
His followers must aim to proclaim  
The wonderful excellencies of His great, matchless name!

Holiness and righteousness are His demand  
Life with Him is not bland but abundantly grand  
His love and beauty you can't withstand  
Your life couldn't be better planned  
So reach out by faith and take His hand  
Fight for holiness and take your stand  
Striving to obey His every command  
So that one day you'll enter the promised land!

About Him we must speak  
He's utterly unique  
Don't worry about your technique  
Or your voice mild and weak  
But only seek with a heart that's meek  
To tell of a future so bleak  
Without the glorious salvation He purchased during holy week!

When Jesus calls you, He calls you to death  
But in the process He'll take away your breath

And ultimately give you a high better than meth!

Some like John will die as a martyr  
Life on earth couldn't be harder . . .

But God's truth over life they do prefer  
Threats of suffering and death will not deter  
For Christ's love in their hearts will captivate and stir  
A great reward God will eternally confer!

Others will die smaller deaths day by day  
Death to self and to all the "good things" He seems to delay  
The idols of the heart we're called to slay  
Christ must be first, it's the only way  
So your number one lover don't betray  
But cry "Christ is all!" and His worth display!

Don't sigh and ask Him why  
Just plead and cry for Him to help you die  
And fix your eye on His everlasting supply  
Full of love, joy, and mercy that'll never run dry  
Him you'll never deny, but to His everlasting arms you'll fly  
And with His infinite beauty He'll forever satisfy!

What you so long for is only a whore  
It's stealing your love and only wants more  
It, you must abhor and deplore  
Against it make war I implore  
So that you might be set free to soar  
Up from the floor and fly to explore  
The King's great beauty galore  
Where there's fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore!

In light of the great mercy we have in Jesus, may we be willing to follow Jesus no matter what, as we daily seek to die to self and honor Christ, even if it means literally giving up our lives, like it did for John the Baptist.

Your Life For Christ Might Leave You Dead  
Because Of All He Did And Said  
John The Baptist Came And Pled  
Behold! The Lamb Of God You'll Wed  
He Takes Away Our Sin We've Read  
The Bridegroom Saves From Hell And Dread  
John Died For Christ And Lost His Head  
For Christ Is Worth This Grim Bloodshed  
Now He's The Famous One Widespread  
Who Took God's Wrath And Died And Bled  
Then Rose Alive To Death Behead  
By Faith Alone He Saves The Dead  
To Greatest Victory Jesus Led  
In Him The Dead Will Live Instead  
To Praise Our King His Fame We Spread!