

Mrk20 – **Beware a Seared Conscience – Mark 6:14-29**

Dave Shepardson, wordbymail.com

This is the **THIRD** – in a **TRILOGY** of messages in **MARK**
About **SHARING the GOSPEL**

Beware a Seared Conscience

Our **CONSCIENCE** is that **part** of us – that **GOD put in us** –
that **knows Right From Wrong**

AND either **COMFORTS** or **AFFLICTS** us
Based on our **actions**

& The **Bible WARNS** - of a **SEARED CONSCIENCE** –
which is a **Conscience**

That **UNABLE** to **sense** –
The **Knowledge** of **GOD'S - Right & Wrong**

Today – we **SEE** - a powerful **ILLUSTRATION**
of a **SEARED CONSCIENCE**

Let's Pray

Don't you LOVE John The Baptist?

John the Baptist – Was the FORERUNNER for Jesus

He was sent by God – to turn the “Spiritual Conscience”
of Israel – BACK to God

LUKE 1:17 says . . . he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the Godly

& he was certainly NOT AFRAID – to share God's Truth
With WHOEVER NEEDED to Hear It

REGARDLESS of their
Social, Political, or Religious Standing

In fact – he was MOST DIRECT
with the Religious Leaders of the Day

& His MESSAGE – ALWAYS Started
With the SIMPLE GOSPEL

Repent of your sins - and turn to God for Salvation

& - Sometime after the Baptism of JESUS

John had the opportunity to SHARE
His Message of Repentance

With HEROD ANTIPAS

HEROD ANTIPAS was the RULER for Rome
Over the GALILEE Area

BUT he lived - in a Fortress near the Dead Sea
not far from where John was Baptizing

HEROD ANTIPAS

was One of SIX HEROD'S in the N.T.

So it CAN get a bit confusing

This Herod was

The SON of HEROD THE GREAT

who Killed The Babies in Bethlehem

When Jesus was born

& This Herod - was now ROME'S Ruler
over the Galilee Area

So 1st – Let's meet the PLAYERS

In our **LESSON** today

HEROD ANTIPAS, who we've already met

Son of Herod the Great

Rome's **Ruler** over the **Galilee**

& then there's - HEROD'S WIFE - HERODIAS

Herodias - was the **daughter** of

This **Herod's HALF-Brother** (Aristobulus)

Which made Herod's **WIFE** – **His NIECE**

Then this **NIECE** – **First Married**

another of **Herod's HALF-Brothers** (Phillip)

that made Herod's **Wife** – His **SISTER-IN-LAW**

So Herod's wife (Herodias) was **FIRST** His **Niece**

THEN also His **Sister-in-law**

AND NOW – **ALSO** his **Wife**

& according to God, this was Not Right

& John The **Baptist** (maybe even politely) **had** let **King Herod**

KNOW - **that this was NOT RIGHT in God's Eyes**

& so – Herodias (Herod's wife) had Taken a VOW

To Remove The Influence of John The Baptist – Permanently

Just as many in our culture (incl'd'g MOST media)
have Taken a VOW

To Remove The Church's Influence - Permanently

& then - our THIRD PLAYER today - is Herodias' Daughter
who we'll meet when she comes on the scene

Now - MARK 1st mentioned

THE ARREST of John The Baptist – Back in CH 1

& Today – MARK RETURNS to it
in kind-of a “FLASH-BACK” Style

But we're NOT going to approach it
In FLASH BACK Style

We'll approach it More – LIKE IT HAPPENED - ok?

So – LET'S START today - down in Mark 6:17

Mark 6:17–18 (NLT)

17 For Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favor to Herodias. She had been his brother Philip's wife, but Herod had married her.

18 John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry your brother's wife (not to mention, your niece)."

So - How does it GO FOR YOU
when you say to SOMEONE:

***This thing that you're doing – it's not right in God's eyes,
based on His Word?***

& how does it GO FOR US as a church
When we say to our CULTURE

***This thing that you're doing – it's not right in God's eyes,
based on His Word?***

It seems CLEAR to Me – that someday (maybe soon)

we may face SIMILAR IMPRISONMENT,
or worse – as John did

FOR SAYING those SAME WORDS to someone

& the “OR WORSE”

WAS Coming – for **John** the **Baptist**

(cont'g) - Mark 6:19 (NLT)

19 So Herodias bore a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But without Herod’s approval she was powerless,

John the **Baptist** **HAD** the **King’s Protection** – (For Now)

& the **Real Question** is

WHY was Herod protecting John the Baptist?

Look closely at Mark 6:20 (NLT)

20 for Herod respected John; and knowing that he was a good and holy man, he protected him. Herod was greatly disturbed whenever he talked with John, but even so, he liked to listen to him.

This is **Such** a **HUGE VERSE** –

because it **SHOWS** - (*that at one time*)

Herod **HAD** a **CONSCIENCE**

That **HAD** some **SENSITIVITY**

to **what** was **Right & Wrong** in **God’s Eyes**

& **We KNOW** – **John** The **Baptist** Would've **BEGAN**
His **Conversations** – with **The SIMPLE GOSPEL**

Repent of your sins - and turn to God for Salvation

& **then** - as the **CONVERSATIONS** **continued**

the **SUBJECT** of **Herod's MARRIAGE** came up

& **John pointed out** to Herod – That **his Marriage**
was NOT RIGHT in God's Eyes – It was AGAINST God's Laws

But **V.20** says - **Herod** **respected** **John**

& **Herod** **knew** **John** was a **GOOD** & **HOLY** man

AND - **Herod** was **DISTURBED** by the **Truth of God**
which is a Good SIGN of Conscience

& So - **WHY** would **Herod** **continue**
to **CALL for John** to come **talk** to him

MAYBE because **John** had the **COURAGE** to **tell him the truth?**

MAYBE because **Herod** **RECOGNIZED the Truth of God?**

MAYBE even - **Herod** was **DRAWN** to the **Truth of God**
to SOME extent – at **THIS POINT** in his **life**

& This is REALLY THE POINT of the Message today

**AT this POINT in Herod's Life
he was, to SOME EXTENT**

IMPACTED BY - & DRAWN TO - the things of God

**There is actually a GOOD CHANCE Herod HAD LEARNED
Some Things about GOD as a child?**

We know his FATHER (*Herod the Great*) THO not a Jew by birth
was RAISED AS a Jew

& so GOD'S TRUTH may well have
GOTTEN into THIS Herod as a boy

& NOW - The Spirit of God
had STIRRED something in Herod

He had SOME DESIRE
to KNOW - *at least* ABOUT GOD

God's Truth – was STIRRING the Smallest Spark
of Possible Faith in Herod

**BUT – Would it GROW ?
Or would it Be PUT OUT - *For Good ?***

As we continue – we SEE the WORK of the BLACK WIDOW
& we SEE the END of John The Baptist (on this earth)

Mark 6:21–22(a) (NLT)

21 Herodias's chance finally came on Herod's birthday. He gave a party for his high government officials, army officers, and the leading citizens of Galilee.

22 Then his daughter, also named Herodias, came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased Herod and his guests . . .

These types of Parties

were usually ALL (or mostly) MEN

& they would MOST RESEMBLE our NON-CHRISTIAN
BACHELOR Party or STAG Party

**Meaning: Excess FOOD, Excess ALCOHOL,
& Excess SENSUAL ENTERTAINMENT**

& the BETTER the SENSUAL Entertainment
the BETTER the PARTY

**& v.22 says - Herod's Daughter came in
& performed a dance that greatly please Herod & his guests**

Now – to try to make SLIGHTLY LESS CREEPY

**this was actually Herod's STEP-DAUGHTER - Performing
a SENSUAL DANCE – for a Bunch of Drunk Old Men**

& it's Pretty Clear – that SHE was BEING USED by her Mom
HOPING to ENTRAP her Herod into something

& IT WORKED

Again – Vs.22(a) says

The daughter's dance greatly pleased all the guests

& then we read in - Mark 6:22(b)-23 (NLT)

22 . . . "Ask me for anything you like," the king (Herod) said to the girl, "and I will give it to you."

23 He even vowed, "I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!"

Here – Suddenly - Herod FINDS HIMSELF

- at the CROSSROADS -

Like ROBERT JOHNSON – Meetin' the Devil

at the Crossroads in MISSISSIPPI

Where the FABLE goes - he SOLD HIS SOUL to the Devil

To be able to PLAY The BLUES

Here too (For Real) - Herod Antipas

was about – to SELL OUT - HIS SOUL

The **DAUGHTER KNEW** **she** was being **used** by her **mother**
to **get something** from **HEROD**

So – in Mark 6:24–25 we read (NLT)

24 She went out and asked her mother, “What should I ask for?”

Her mother told her, “Ask for the head of John the Baptist!”

25 So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, “I want the head of John the Baptist, right now, on a tray!”

After all – it is a FEAST

So **BRING ME** the **HEAD** of the **Man Of God**
On a SILVER PLATTER

& at **THAT MOMENT** - **Something BROKE in Herod**

He **HAD TO CHOOSE** – In an **INSTANT**

to **Either HOLD ON** to what **Little LIGHT**
he had left - about **GOD’S TRUTH**

Or to **SUCCUMB** to the **Conscience SEARING Pressures**
of his **Life In The World**

& - **although he regretted it**

Herod CHOSE – to **SEAR HIS CONSCIENCE**

& have **John The Baptist** Killed

Mark 6:26 (NLT)

26 Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn't refuse her.

He Deeply Regretted it

But Herod CHOSE

His **SENSUAL IMMORALITY**

His **WORLDLY PARTIES**

& Mostly – **He Chose HIS PRIDE**

ALL OVER – **What** he **KNEW** was **RIGHT Before GOD**

& - **the RESULT** was

a **CONSCIENCE** - *that became* **COMPLETELY SEARED**
to the **Things of GOD**

There HAD BEEN the **BEGINNING**
of a **Spiritual Awakening** in **Herod**

The was an **EMBER of LIGHT**
Glowing in **his Very Dark World**

But – when it **CAME DOWN TO**
EITHER - the **WORLD'S WAYS** or **GOD'S WAYS**

Herod CHOSE

to **SNUFF OUT** what **little light** he **had** - **PERMANENTLY**

Mark 6:27-29 (NLT)

27 So he (Herod) immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off John's head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the prison,

28 brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who took it to her mother.

29 When John's disciples heard what had happened, they came to get his body and buried it in a tomb.

Now – **Please HEAR ME** – **Right here**

Even NOW – **Even at THIS POINT**

God WOULD HAVE Forgiven Herod

EVEN at this Moment

Herod could have CHOSEN to REPENT

& Turn to God for Salvation

EVEN After having **John** The **Baptist** - **BEHEADED**

Do WE Understand that?

That **GOD WOULD HAVE**
immediately Forgiven Herod

IF HEROD would **have turned TO GOD** For **Salvation**

Listen pls – YOU killed Jesus !

It was **YOUR SIN** - & **MY SIN**
that **Put Jesus** to **DEATH** - on **the Cross**

& **God** will **IMMEDIATELY FORGIVE US**
the **moment** we truly **Turn TO HIM** for **Salvation**

God's GRACE was STILL THERE for **Herod**

BUT INSTEAD of - TURNING TO GOD – for Salvation
Herod was **going** to **SEAR His CONSCIENCE**

so he would **NEVER have** to **THINK**
about anything regarding **GOD** – **EVER - Again**

& SO - TIME PASSED – AT LEAST A YEAR OR MORE

& then – we read BACK UP in Mark 6:14–16 (NLT)

14 Herod Antipas, the king, soon heard about Jesus, because everyone was talking about him. Some were saying, “This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do such miracles.”

15 Others said, “He’s the prophet Elijah.” Still others said, “He’s a prophet like the other great prophets of the past.”

16 When Herod heard about Jesus, he said, “John, the man I beheaded, has come back from the dead.”

I wonder if Herod **REALLY Thought John the **Baptist**
had **ACTUALLY come back** from **the Dead****

& if he was speaking Metaphorically
like, ***“oh great, I’m going to have to DEAL with THIS, again”***

Has that ever happened to you?

Where **you thought** you had **BURIED** all the **Truths of God**
& **you** were **just trying** to **Live happily IN your SIN**

<u>& Then GOD</u> – just <u>BRINGS</u> it <u>ALL Right Back Up</u> & <u>SETS IT Right</u> on <u>the Table</u> - in <u>front of you</u>

THIS is the **GRACE OF GOD**, that **NEVER GIVES UP on us**

God will CONTINUE SHOWING UP in our Lives

& he will CONTINUE to Call us
to Receive His GRACE & FORGIVENESS

UNTIL our CONSCIENCE – is SO SEARED
that we can NO LONGER SENSE God's truth

& THAT – is exactly what HAPPENED – to HEROD

In LUKE CH 23 – Jesus was ON TRIAL before PILATE
Just HOURS before he would GO to The CROSS

& in Luke 23:6 – Pilate finds out Jesus is a Galilean –
so he sends him to THIS SAME Herod – Herod Antipas

Because Herod was Rome's Ruler over the Galilee
& He was IN Jerusalem that night

& what Transpires – is TERRIFYING

This is the SAME Herod
who was MOVED by John's words

The SAME Herod - who enjoyed hearing John speak
about the things of God

& Herod - WANTED to See Jesus
But NOT for the SAME Reasons

& so Jesus was TAKEN to HEROD

& Suddenly – Herod Had
the Very SON of GOD - STANDING before him

& all Herod did – WAS MOCK HIM

Herod's CONSCIENCE
had been COMPLETELY SEARED

He had GONE SO FAR into the DARKNESS of the world

that he couldn't see a GLIMPSE – of the RADIANCE of GOD
that was STANDING - Right in Front of Him

& ALL Herod could DO –
was TAUNT Jesus to perform a Miracle

& CHALLENGED JESUS with meaningless questions

& then Luke 23:11 we read (NLT)

11 Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

This - IS TERRIFYING

John the Baptist had GIVEN HEROD the light -
God had PLANTED A GLIMMER of light in him

But then - at the CROSSROADS that night
Herod's CONSCIENCE WAS SEARED

& he began a SLIDE
into FULL & OVERWHELMING DARKNESS

& now - the very AUTHOR of LIFE & LIGHT – *God in the Flesh*
was STANDING in front of him

But Jesus NEVER EVEN SPEAKS

Because he knows – HEROD'S CONSCIENCE – IS DEAD

As R. Kent Hughes says here

"Herod sees nothing in Christ, and more terrifying, Christ sees nothing in him."

Herod's CONSCIENCE IS SEARED

& the DARKNESS has won HEROD'S SOUL

TO CLOSE – LET ME SAY - *If you are not yet a believer*

PLEASE – Keep your HEART - & your CONSCIENCE
OPEN to the Truths Of GOD

Please, BE CAREFUL – to **KEEP HOLD**
of **whatever amount** of **GOD'S TRUTH** you have

DON'T LET - The **DARKNESS & SIN** of **this World**

SNUFF OUT whatever **amount**
of **God's Truth** you have **received**

Instead - **ACT ON** what **you've received**,

Move closer to what you've heard
about **FORGIVENESS** & **SALVATION**
thru FAITH in **Jesus Christ** Alone

ASK GOD to **Open Your Heart**
to **whatever truth he** has **given you**

& **ASK HIM** to **DRAW YOU CLOSER** to **His Truth**

DON'T TRY to **FORGET**, or **ESCAPE**, **COVER UP**, or **REMOVE**
whatever amount of **God's Truth** you have

And – Most of ALL
BEWARE OF A SEARED CONSCIENCE

Let's Pray