

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Mark -The Simple Gospel | Week 20: The Christian's Head on Culture's Platter

Mark is telling us something important about the true nature and 'Cost of Discipleship.'

Mark 6:14-29 (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."

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."

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

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. "Ask me for anything you like," the king 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!"

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!"

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. ²⁷ So he 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.

Luke 23:8-11 (NLT) ⁸ Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. ⁹ He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. ¹⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. 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.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY:

1. **Christians have the responsibility of representing God's truth to culture.**
2. **Culture will never be willing to receive nor yield to truth.**

"Because goodness is awful. Or put another way, goodness is terrifying to evil. Someone has said, "The truth will make you free, but first it will make you miserable." - R. Kent Hughes

“Both Jesus and John are arrested for challenging the powers that be. Both are put to death by self-seeking rulers who know their victims are innocent but vacillate under pressure and choose expediency over justice.” Mark L. Strauss

Love speaks truth even if (and when) it causes offense.

The gospel offends, but it is the only truth that saves.

3. The martyrdom of John the Baptist illustrates the ultimate cost of discipleship.

Mark 8:34-35 (NLT) ³⁴Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.”

Prayer Book for St. John the Baptist’s Day:

“Almighty God, by whose providence thy servant, John the Baptist, was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance; make us so 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.”