



Sermon Series: Acts

Sermon Title: Herod's Folly

Date: 6/7/2026

**Acts 12:18-25**

**Big Idea: Give God the glory and celebrate Him!**

Glory - the honor, admiration, and recognition given to someone because of what they have achieved or accomplished. It is not something anyone wants stolen from them. **Acts 12:18-25** gives us a vivid and sobering picture of what happens when someone takes the glory that belongs to God - and what God does about it.

**What kind of man was Herod?**

Herod Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great - the one who ordered the massacre of boys in Bethlehem to kill Jesus - and the nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist and approved the crucifixion of Jesus. This was a family line defined by ruthless, bloody attempts to hold power. When the soldiers failed to keep Peter in prison, Herod had them executed. When the people of Tyre and Sidon - whose economy depended on his territory - came seeking peace, they came with carefully crafted flattery, hoping to get back into his good graces. This was not a man known for mercy or humility.

**Why did God take Herod's life?**

Herod stepped out in royal robes - historically described as garments that shimmered like silver in the sunlight - and delivered an oration. The crowd responded: the voice of a god, and not of a man! And Herod said nothing to correct them. The ancient historian Josephus confirms the account, recording that Herod did not rebuke their flattery, was struck with severe pain in his belly, and died five days later. Scripture is direct about the reason: because he did not give God the glory (**Acts 12:23**). It was not simply silence - it was the acceptance of worship that belonged to God alone.

## What do we know about God?

**Exodus 34:14** says the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. This is not the sinful jealousy Paul describes in **Galatians 5:20** - wanting what belongs to someone else. God is not envious of an idol. But He is fiercely protective when the glory that belongs to Him is redirected elsewhere. It is less like envy and more like the response of someone whose possession has been stolen and handed to another. Every ability we have - intelligence, creativity, strength, opportunity - comes from Him. As **Acts 17:28** puts it, in Him we live and move and have our being. Glory belongs to God because everything that makes glory possible comes from God.

## What is the implication for you and me?

Most of us are not standing on stages being called gods. But we face a quieter version of the same test every day. Flattery and praise can inflate our ego, redirect credit that belongs to God, and short-circuit our thinking. The people of Tyre and Sidon were not celebrating Herod - they were using praise to get what they wanted. Compliments with hidden agendas are still a form of manipulation. The response God is looking for is not elaborate performance but honest acknowledgment - redirecting credit to the one it actually belongs to. **Isaiah 42:8** says it plainly: I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other.

## What was the outcome?

**Acts 12:24** follows Herod's death with a striking contrast: but the word of God increased and multiplied. God removed the one stealing His glory and used humble men to spread it instead. Herod Agrippa was the last king to rule over what we might call Israel - his son never ruled Judea, which fell under direct Roman control. That shift gave Christians religious protection, the shield of Roman citizenship, and safe travel across the empire. It solidified Koine Greek as the universal language - the very language of the New Testament. It gave Paul a legal system he would later use to appeal directly to Caesar. What looked like one more ruler washed away became a river carrying the gospel further than ever. God's purposes are never stopped by human pride. When glory comes your way - will you hold it, or will you hand it back?

### Discussion Questions:

1. **Glory is defined as the honor and recognition given for an achievement or action. In your own words, why do you think God takes it seriously when His glory is given to someone or something else?**
2. **Herod accepted praise that belonged to God and paid for it with his life. That seems extreme - but what does his story reveal about how seriously God guards what belongs to Him?**
3. **The sermon describes a quieter version of Herod's test that we face every day. What does it look like practically to redirect credit and recognition back to God when praise comes your way?**
4. **Flattery was used by the people of Tyre and Sidon as a tool to get what they wanted. Have you ever experienced praise being used as manipulation? How do you stay grounded when that happens?**
5. **Herod's death opened doors for the gospel that his life had been blocking. What does it say about God that He can use even the worst moments - opposition, loss, death - to advance His purposes?**