



## PLAYING THE VILLAIN

Sermon Notes for Sunday, December 10, 2023. Based on Rev. Chris Heckert's sermon.

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When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. – Matthew 2:3-4

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1. Why doesn't anyone include Herod in the nativity scene? The answer is easy: He's \_\_\_\_\_!
2. It takes a solid antagonist to craft a good story, but when we place every character into "bad" and "good" categories, it robs us of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the human condition.
3. King Herod did not qualify as a possible "Messiah" because he was not of \_\_\_\_\_ lineage.
4. The line between good and evil runs directly through every human \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Proverbs 18: 21 says, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its \_\_\_\_\_."
6. The truth is that the scandal of the Christmas story is that God breaks into a very broken world to bring \_\_\_\_\_ to all people.
7. God's love is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and unconditional.
8. Be aware that love can \_\_\_\_\_ pain, and all are loved by God.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What Herod-like qualities exist within you? (Reflect on things that you have done, said, or thought in the past that reflect the capacity to do evil, and cause harm.)
  2. How does the grace of God offer you hope, despite your worst faults, that you can offer to others?
  3. Who are some of the people who have been labeled, cast out, and marginalized that need to be shown the unconditional love of God, as shown to us through Jesus?
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