

John the Baptist Is Martyred Mark 6:14-29

by David Servant

The sermon explores the tragic story of John the Baptist's martyrdom and the moral lessons surrounding sin, repentance, and the consequences of one's actions.

Scripture: Exodus 20:13, Matthew 14:1, John 14:6, Acts 3:19, 1 John 3:15

Topics: "Murder And Forgiveness", "Repentance And Salvation"

Description

David Servant delves into the tragic story of Herod Antipas, the son of a murderer, who ordered the execution of John the Baptist due to a foolish oath and pressure from his wicked wife, Herodias. Despite his conscience convicting him, Herod succumbed to his promise and had John beheaded. The sermon also addresses the possibility of murderers entering heaven through repentance and faith, emphasizing the grave sin of murder and the need for forgiveness through Jesus. The audience is urged to reflect on their upbringing and the blessing of being raised in a family that follows Christ's teachings.

Transcript

Herod Antipas, the man who ordered the execution of John the Baptist, was the son of a murderer. His father was Herod the Great, who had once killed his own wife and two of his sons to preserve his power. It was Herod the Great who had also ordered the killing of all the male babies in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus. With such an example set before him as a child, it is no wonder that Herod Antipas was a wicked man. He had fallen in love with his half-brother's wife, Herodias, who also happened to be his niece, and she had fallen in love with him. So she divorced Herod Antipas's brother and married him.

John the Baptist, a preacher of righteousness, had declared that what Herod and his new wife had done was a sin. Herodias hated John as a result of this and wanted him killed. But Herod's conscience would not allow him to order John's execution, and so he only had John put in prison as a favor to his selfish wife. He was under conviction for his sin and knew that John did not deserve to die.

Herod, however, made a foolish public oath to Herodias's daughter, offering her anything she desired after she pleased him with a dance during his birthday party. Her mother instructed her to request John the Baptist's head on a tray. Herod was trapped by his promise, and so he reluctantly ordered John's beheading. A Roman soldier immediately carried out the gruesome task, and gave Herodias's daughter John's head on a tray. She in turn gave it to Herodias. What a sickening sight! Think how evil someone would have to be to desire such a thing!

Although this is a sad story, for John it had a happy ending, because he was in heaven, enjoying God's presence, even before Herodias had possession of his head! The people I feel sorry for are Herod and Herodias, who, unless they experienced a repentance the Bible doesn't record, have been in hell now for almost two thousand years.

Q. Is it possible for murderers to get into heaven?

A. Yes, but only if they repent and are saved by faith. Remember that Moses, David and Paul could all be considered murderers. However, any murderer who dies without repenting will spend eternity in hell. The apostle John wrote, "You know that murderers don't have eternal life within them" (1 John 3:15).

Q. At present, the United States government says that it is legal for women to murder their babies before they're born. Because it's legal, does that make it O.K.?

A. No, because God has always said that murder is wrong. Murder is perhaps the highest expression of selfishness that exists, and murdering one's own child is the most debased murder a person could commit. There are millions of mothers and fathers in America who are child-murderers. Their only hope of escaping hell is to repent and believe in Jesus. Praise God that He offers them forgiveness.

Application: Herod Antipas grew up having a murderer for a father. Herodias's daughter grew up with a mother and stepfather who were murderers. Aren't you glad you were born into your family? You are blessed to have parents who love Jesus and who are teaching you right from wrong.

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