

Mark 6:21-44

I. Review:

- 1) The heart of the battle to bring people to repentance is a spiritual battle. When Jesus sent the disciples out He gave them authority over unclean spirits and demons. Eph. 6:12
 - 2) Jesus also sent His disciples out in twos. We need to be aware of our own capacity for weakness, sin, and need for accountability and support. We are not islands to ourselves.
 - 3) In charging the disciples to take only the very minimum; He put them in a situation where they were totally dependent on the Lord and on other people. He still calls us to that place today.
 - 4) Shaking the “dust off their feet” as a sign to those who rejected God’s word and conviction was a sign of just how serious contempt for the word of the Lord is.
 - 5) The basic mission of the disciples on this trip was to bring people to repentance. Before people can hear the gospel they need to be aware of their sin.
 - 6) We see the common (both then and now) misunderstanding of who Jesus was. Many thought He was Elijah or a prophet raised from the dead (see this today in Jews, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Muslims). Herod (haunted by guilt) was convinced He was John the Baptist raised from the dead, after he had had him decapitated.
 - 7) Herodias, Herod’s illegitimate wife, wanted him killed because he boldly challenged their relationship as adultery.
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I. Vs 21-29 The occasion for John’s murder:

- A. A birthday celebration for Herod, with a banquet and many leading Gentiles in attendance.
- B. Entertainment for the night was the dancing of the daughter (Salome) of Herodias. She pleased Herod and the guests. (Having a young unmarried girl dance was itself a picture of the immorality of the event).
 - 1) So much so that Herod made a vow to “give her up to half of His kingdom”.
 - 2) Herodias encouraged her daughter to ask for John’s head on a platter, which she did.
 - a. Vs. 26-29 Even though it made Herod exceedingly sorry, he wanted to save face in front of his guest so he gave the order for John to be killed and it was carried out.
 - b. Tradition has it that later Herodias was driven from position and power and even her homeland, and spent her life in poverty, exile, and misery. (Calvin)
 - c. John’s disciples were able to come and take John’s body and lay it in a tomb. They did this at risk to themselves.

II. Lessons to be learned from this incident with John:

- 1) Proclaiming the gospel to a non-believing world is dangerous.
 - a) Many of us today keep waiting for the gospel to be “popular”, not going to happen. (Jn.15:18-27)
- 2) Sin is the key issue between people and the Lord. Rom. 6:23/Gen. 3:5
- 3) To be in sin is to live for self and to feel justified in doing so. Gen. 11:4/Luke 9:23
- 4) Being a follower not only can lead to difficult circumstances, it most likely will and God’s promise is not that we are spared, but that we face them “with Him” and through “the power of the Spirit”.
 - a) Heb. 13:5, Ps 23, Mt. 28:20, Rom. 8:11
- 5) Being faithful to the gospel still can mean death for the believers of Jesus.
 - a. The witness of today’s persecuted church. Our lives as Christians is the exception, not the rule. Many are jailed, cast out of their families, and put to death every day for the gospel.
 - b. Voice of the Martyrs is a great resource.

III. Vs 30-44 Feeding of the 5,000

- A. In Jesus taking the disciples “Away by themselves” after they returned from their mission, we see a familiar pattern of work and restoration.
 - 1) There is also a sense of “pouring our lives out” as a good thing (Phi. 2:6 emptying Himself). The needs were so great the disciples “had no leisure even to eat”.

- B. Vs 34 We see a familiar dilemma here in their tiredness, and yet the very real needs of people.
 - 1) "In this instance" Jesus knows their needs are the priority, so moved with "compassion" He interrupts the time of retreat to care for the people.
 - b. Do you think all of the crowd believed in Jesus at this point? Jn. 6:26 (different occasion, same motives)
 - 1) Their area of need in this case was being as "sheep without a shepherd".
 - a. His response to that need was to "teach" them.

- IV. Vs 35 The disciples (not having yet been restored) were feeling the burden of so many people being tired and needing to eat. (I am guessing they just wanted to get on with the vacation)
 - A. What do you see the purpose being in Jesus saying, "you give them something to eat"?
 - 1) Is He still teaching?
 - 2) Why do you think the disciples bring up the huge cost and undertaking it would be to feed them?
 - B. Why does Jesus have them assess the resources they have available?
 - 1) Is there any significance in having them sit in "groupings"?

- V. Vs 41 Jesus is always teaching, what is He teaching as he prepares to serve the meal?
 - A. Do the twelve baskets of left-overs make a statement to the disciples?
 - B. Is there an important principle in this for us today also? (Mt. 6:33, Jn. 10:10)

- VI. Vs. 44 In letting us know there were 5,000 men served, Mark also lets us know there were probably a lot more people there.
 - A. The principle this helps us get, is the Lord's incredible power and desire to do "immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine" (Eph. 3:20)
 - 1) What makes this hard to remember and trust?
 - 2) Patch Adams "Four, Four, Four" – "you have to look past the problem"