

PENTECOST 7 (2021)

Mark 6

Mark 6:14–29 *King Herod heard of it,* for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

In the Name of Jesus.

Y'all do well, my dear ones, to call your poor pastor 'pastor.' Add first name, last name, just 'shepherd;' it's all good. But today I urge y'all to do even better. Call your pastor 'Your majesty. Your highness. Your eminence.' Grant your poor ruler up here in the pulpit a kingly title. For your sake; not for mine.

'If you do not love your brethren whom you see, neither can you love God Whom you have not seen.'

Call Jesus your Christ, your King, the Final Authority over YOU! Well done! And it profits you NOTHING, unless you call your poor pastor that too.

Call me 'your loftiness,' but don't mean the beheader king or Amos's king Jerry. I mean a monarch in this vein:

"You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." ¹

In the Old Testament, a man was not a proper king of Israel unless he had at least one special prophet assigned to call the ruler back to repentance and the Ten Commandments and all that. So when the final prophet

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 10:42–45). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

appeared—John—no doubt a king was soon to come. And He came. And what a King:

¹ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’ ”

⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

²

“King Herod heard of it...” Someone tattled. Tattled on Jesus. Centuries before, Amos got the same treatment: Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 1:1–12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words.” Poor Amaziah; poor priest; poor Jeroboam; poor king. ‘His WORDS!’ Whatever happened to ‘sticks and stones...’?

According to the testimonies, Old and New, THAT is what kings is fer: tattlin’! ‘I’m go’n’ t’ tell! I’m go’n’ t’ tell! I’m gonna holler and I’m gonna yell. I’ll git you in trouble for everything you do! ‘Cuz’ I’m gonna tell on you!’ (Learned that song during my years in kindergarten. Maybe it was supposed to wave us off of ‘telling’. We young scholars were not convinced.)

Doctor Luther was fond of saying that if people refuse to listen to the Law, let them listen to the hangman. In the Large Catechism, he writes this specifically about children who dishonor their parents. Your children, dear saints-----stop calling them ‘YOUR’ children. Baptized, they are now God’s. And God’s children must be trained to love and honor and cherish ALL God-ordained authority.

So, what’s with the Baptizer calling OUT ‘King’ Herod? What about Amos in the day? ‘If you’re gonna hit the king, you better kill the king!’ What happened to the prophet Amos after that king took notice, we are not told. What happened to John—a prophet; more than that!—we heard in gruesome detail between breakfast and lunch today.

“King Herod heard of it.” Of what? Of the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth, sending out his ambassadors with full authority: even the demons would obey them, his men! Then it was all over social media and poor King Herod had the bad luck of still owning a sliver of a conscience. Even kings get scared when they kill you but you don’t stay

dead.

King Herod and King Pilate killed Jesus. But He would not stay dead. And what is YOUR certainty of that, my dear ones?

KING...PAUL!

This man here is not purer than any of y'all, the LAW says. And I am here to guarantee you: when HE came as one of us, when HE was baptized with all the people 'confessing their sins,' then HE—The Holy One—was a sinner too. He was under the Law; He was with us; He WAS 'us!' And He still is.

Your certainty? I have absolved you today. I am right now announcing--God's plenipotentiary ambassador with all the rights of heaven, earth and hell—THIS king and pastor is NOT here to listen to anyone tattling on you. Because your God will not open His ears to anyone ratting you out. Not the devil; not your enemies; not your friends; not YOU!

When you approach His altar today and hear this poor man, under the Law, saying to you, 'The Body of Christ; the Blood of Christ; for you,' know that this mighty ruler is as mighty a sinner as you. THAT...IS...WHY... the Lord works His salvation THROUGH the glory-seeking apostles and all glory-seeking preachers until the end.

FOR YOU! FOR MANY!

Your FAITH! ‘Well, if the God I’ve seen is funneling His good pleasure through THIS guy—then the bar to God’s good pleasure could not be set lower!’

When I say to you, ‘Go in peace,’ say YOUR line: Amen. And mean by that ‘Amen,’ ‘Peace it is! Because YOU say so, your majesty!’

Tell the world that YOUR Ruler is fully with those who confess their sins, in the Name of Jesus.