

021220. Luke 9.1-9 - Jesus Powerfully Sends, Herod Impotently Sleuths

One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. 2 Then **he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God** and to heal the sick. 3 “Take nothing for your journey,” he instructed them. “Don’t take a walking stick, a traveler’s bag, food, money, or even a change of clothes. 4 Wherever you go, stay in the same house until you leave town. 5 And if a town refuses to welcome you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate.” 6 So they began their circuit of the villages, preaching the Good News and healing the sick.

7 When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, heard about everything Jesus was doing, he was puzzled. Some were saying that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. 8 Others thought Jesus was Elijah or one of the other prophets risen from the dead. 9 “I beheaded John,” Herod said, “so who is this man about whom I hear such stories?” **And he kept trying to see him.**

*the greatest earthly authority kept trying to *see* Jesus. He killed the one who prepared the way for the Lord and doesn’t even recognize that he prepared his own heart to never see the way of the Lord. There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death. Prov. 14.12

Those who do what pleases God will live forever. 1 John 2.17

Job 42.2 I know you can do anything and no one can stop you.

Herod is trying to get what he wants and gets nothing. Jesus isn’t just trying to bring the Kingdom of God to our fingertips; **He’s doing it.**

What a contrast: Jesus empowers and sends by only His word. Herod’s words only increase his own confusion.

Mark 6 - Herod Antipas? More like Herod Impotence.

14 Herod Antipas, the king, soon heard about Jesus, because everyone was talking about him. Some were saying, “This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do such miracles.” 15 Others said, “He’s the prophet Elijah.” Still others said, “He’s a prophet like the other great prophets of the past.”

16 When Herod heard about Jesus, he said, “**John, the man I beheaded, has come back from the dead.**”

17 For Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favor to Herodias. She had been his brother Philip’s wife, but Herod had married her. 18 John had been telling Herod, “It is against God’s law for you to marry your brother’s wife.” 19 So Herodias bore a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But without Herod’s approval she was powerless, 20 for **Herod respected John; and knowing that he was a good and holy man, he protected him. Herod was greatly disturbed whenever he talked with John, but even so, he liked to listen to him.** (Respect and recognition is not enough)

21 Herodias’s chance finally came on Herod’s birthday. He gave a party for his high government officials, army officers, and the leading citizens of Galilee. 22 Then his daughter, also named Herodias, came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased Herod and his guests. “Ask me for anything you like,” the king said to the girl, “and I will

give it to you.” 23 He even vowed, “I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!”

24 She went out and asked her mother, “What should I ask for?”

Her mother told her, “Ask for the head of John the Baptist!”

25 So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, “I want the head of John the Baptist, right now, on a tray!”

26 Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn’t refuse her. 27 So he immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off John’s head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the prison, 28 brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who took it to her mother. 29 When John’s disciples heard what had happened, they came to get his body and buried it in a tomb.

Luke 23

8 Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, **because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle.**

9 He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer.

10 Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations.

11 Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

12 (Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends that day.)

God is all done ‘sending truth’ to Herod. The clamoring crowd killed the little king’s curiosity. If Herod was truly seeking God, God never fails to respond to those who seek him. He went from wanting to see some tricks to mocking and ridiculing Jesus. After all, he’s already beheaded John, the one who came to prepare the way for the Lord. God had already sent John to tell about the kingdom of God. And like Pharaoh in Egypt, Herod became absolutely resolute in what he really wanted.

Even Pagan Pilate got an answer from Jesus:

John 19

9 He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. 10 “Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

11 Then Jesus said, **“You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”**

No matter how powerful you are, Jesus is greater. And at some point, the powerful pass the place of **being able to hear** from God anymore.

Matt. 13

For they look, but they don’t really see.

They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand.

14 This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says,
‘When you hear what I say, you will not understand.

When you see what I do, you will not comprehend.

15 For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear,

and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see,
and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me and **let** me heal them.’

And it’s not just the rich and powerful or those who sit on thrones. It’s those who are absolutely content in their own good, in their own opinion, in their own ways. If you remain satisfied in a good thing accomplished apart from Christ, you’re living like Herod. Just as wrong. “I’ve never beheaded anyone (except in my heart and words.) Jesus told His disciples ‘ go tell everyone about the kingdom of God’ and if we’re like Herod, we want our questions answered instead of simple obedience. “I have questions, God!” Jesus says “I have directions. Go and tell. Do what you know you’re supposed to do.” Maybe Jesus intends to talk with you about your questions while you’re on your way to doing what He says. He likely has more directions for you, but what will it matter if you won’t follow these. It didn’t matter for Herod. Herod heard John but never responded and when Herod wanted more information, there was no point. Herod had killed the voice of God in his own life.

When we prefer financial expedience to trusting in faith in God’s provision, we live like Herod and are racing past the place where we’ll hear from God anymore. “I know what the Bible says, but I also know how business works. Gotta do what works.”

We were prefer political ambitions and party preference and the obsession with doing (social) justice to the exclusion of what God requires. (Micah 6.8 ‘do justly love mercy walk humbly with God).

The Good News of God’s Pursuing Love

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is always at work in the world convicting the world of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come. That means you and I have to work very hard and very diligently to keep our life the way we want it. Fighting against God as He calls us into relationship with Him every moment of every day sure makes a person strong. You have to work really hard to stay away from God. And God will never take that from you. All that work, you absolutely should be able to reap what you sow.

God loves freedom and offers real freedom. You are empowered by God to believe or not believe His promises for you. Believing carries with it God and His reward:

Heb. 11

6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Explore:

Luke 9.2 **he sent them out to tell *everyone* about the Kingdom of God**

Express:

The Way, the truth and the life of Jesus Christ - the kingdom of God - is readily available to everyone.

Experience:

Jesus, please help me always listen and respond to You. Work in me and give me the desire to hear You and the power to respond to everything You say. Please don’t let me get in the practice of wanting my ways more than Yours. AMEN.