

Home Group Notes

Mark 6:14-29 – A Gruesome Banquet

Mark does one of his sandwiches again! This retrospective account of John the Baptist's beheading is the 'meat' in a sandwich of the mission of the 12 going out and then returning jubilantly when they see healings, demons cast out and people turning to Jesus in repentance.

1. What sells newspapers today? Was it any different in Jesus time? So, why does Mark write like he does?

Read Mark 6:14-29

2. Why does Mark put this particular story in the middle of an account about the disciples' faith and ministry?
3. In the passage itself, what prompts the accounts of John the Baptist's execution (vs 14-16)?
4. Jesus asked the question, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:28-29). What are some of the views that people have of Jesus today?
5. This account prepares the reader for what is to happen to Jesus. How?

Herodias was the daughter of Herod's half-brother, Herod Aristobulus. Herod fell in love with her when he stayed over at their house. She saw a greater opportunity up the social ladder. He divorced his wife and she divorced her husband, and they got married – despite being blood relatives. Herod was actually not a king, although he liked to be known as one. Rome did not permit him to be a king, but rather a tetrarch.

6. So, why did John make such a fuss over this marriage?
7. Why was Herodias so incensed by John (v19)?
8. In light of v20, why did Herod arrest John? Who was behind the arrest? What picture of Herod does Mark paint?
9. Do others influence us in ways which they should not?

V21-22 depicts this banquet as the party to end all parties! The girl, Herodias' daughter, is probably a teenager. The whole sordid episode leaves Herod vulnerable to suggestion.

10. Are there situations, circumstances or events which leave us vulnerable to suggestion, or even temptation?
11. How can we guard against these?
12. We read that Herod was apparently fascinated with John and his preaching but not convicted enough to change his life. In what ways did he respond to and treat John similarly to how Pilate would treat Jesus?
13. How does John's ministry foreshadow Jesus' ministry?

Prayer Points

1. *Pray that we may be bold when facing opposition to Jesus.*
2. *Pray for our leaders that they will be people of integrity.*
3. *Pray that as a church we would stand for what really matters.*
4. *Pray for our fellow Christians facing opposition for their faith in Jesus.*