

Bad Opportunities
When Promises Go Too Far
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 14
Mk 6:14-29
June 22-23, 2024

Introduction

- Who are your friends? – different teachers and psychologists have defined friendship in various ways. Some say that we have three layers of friends, some two. The simplest way I think about it is that we have **Acquaintances & Friends** and friends differ in closeness. [explain]. **Who are your friends?**
- Why are they your friends? – Why is always a fascinating question for me because it speaks to **motivation and vision**. Maybe some of you haven't dug down to ask the question why your friends are your friends, but it's worth doing. **Disclaimer:** Just because they **started** with one motivation doesn't mean that's their **current** motivation. People grow and change. But it's necessary to understand that **human beings don't do things for no reason. They have either a conscious or unconscious reason for doing it.** Here are some motivations in friendship:
 - Childhood limited options - many of our first friendships are not only accidental (I argue that most friendships in life begin accidentally), but they are **chosen due to limited options**. For example: the **only other kid in the neighborhood; parents were friends**; were in the **same class** and other kids already had their groups, etc.
 - Proximity Friends – These are **work, neighborhood or school friends**. You have common schedules and are forced together on a consistent basis and that allows a friendship to grow, but the **glue factor** is being in the same job or school. That's not bad, it's just a different motivation. Those friends **drift after a job or school change, or a move.**
 - Passion Common Ground – many times there is **ONE giant connection point** that starts a friendship or keeps it going. For example: **trauma** in common; **addiction** in common; **Jesus** in common. It's a life-altering experience or reality that ties you together. Those **ebb and flow depending on the passion and commitment level to that experience.**
 - Shared Interests – these are the friends that you just like being around because **they like what you like.**
 - Dysfunction – sometimes there are **pushy** people that need **followers**. Sometimes there are **lonely** people that just need **attention**. Sometimes they hang out with you to get **perks** from the people you know and experiences you have.
 - The key question behind all of this is: **What are they getting out of your relationship and what are you getting from them?** Sometimes the deep down reason is healthy and sometimes it's not. We think about how **famous** people have to be careful with who wants to be with them because they want to use them, but the truth is all people have variations of that to a smaller degree.
- Birds of a Feather – **your friends are relatively comfortable being around you because they think you are like them.** If you think you are significantly different than

your friends, you may not be as **self-aware** as you think you are. Yes, there are different motivations but in general people with perceived similarity hang around each other. Sometimes this shines an awkward light into our lives because we realize that we aren't quite the good influence that we think we are.

- Who are your greatest influences in your life? Why? What are they like? – Although our nuclear family and friendships are usually the most constant influences in our lives, there are other influencers shaping us. Media has always created idols and famous people, but it's fascinating to me that in **recent years social media and online technology names their impact people: INFLUENCERS.** Why? Because what they do, what they like, what they think, how they pretend to live, eventually permeates other people's lives and they start doing it too.

Our **INFLUENCES** can make or **BREAK** us

- Recap – Last Week...
 - Jesus is rejected at Nazareth – He moves on
 - He sends out His team (12) to go do what He does
- This Week – Flashback like Wayne's World...

Lesson

- Guess Who's Back? Back Again...
 - King Herod Thinks Jesus is John the Baptist Resurrected
 - **Mk 6:14-16** – "*King Herod (Antipas) heard of it [Jesus' team impacting the region], 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." ¹⁵ But others said, "He is [the ancient prophet] Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶ But when Herod (Antipas) heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."*
 - King Herod¹ – **Herod is a title like Pharaoh** is. It sounds like a first name but it's not. There are **at least 4 Herod's mentioned in the Bible.** Let me tie them together for you and tell you the crazy Herod-family story (**Days of our Lives**).
 - Idumean People Group – oddly enough the story for their family starts a long time before with two fraternal twin boys named: **Jacob and Esau.** They were born to the Patriarch **Isaac** who was the son of **Abraham.** Jacob was the line of the **Jews** and Esau was the line of the **Edomites**, later known as the **Idumeans** (Greek form of Edomites). Jacob and Esau **didn't like each other.** God nevertheless blessed Esau

¹ "Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and Malthace, was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from his father's death in 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. His total disregard for Jewish sensitivity was displayed not only in his marriage to Herodias, but in the selection of an ancient cemetery as the site for his capital, Tiberias. By this choice Herod virtually excluded Jewish settlers, for residence in the city would render them perpetually unclean in terms of the ritual law. The royal title had been denied to Antipas by Augustus. Goaded by the ambitious Herodias, it was Antipas' request for the title of "king" which officially led to his dismissal and exile in A.D. 39.⁴⁸ Mark's use of the royal title may reflect local custom, or it may be a point of irony. Herod had modeled his court after the imperial pattern, and it is possible that the irony of designating him by a title he coveted, but failed to secure, would be appreciated in Rome where his sentence had been sealed." NICNT, William Lane

into a large people group. Unfortunately, the two people groups didn't get along either for hundreds and hundreds of years.

Tradition/history tells us that periodically the Edomites would attack the Israelites and they eventually took a portion of Israel's land (southern Israel with Hebron as their new capital - when Israel was forcibly removed by the Babylonian Empire – 586 BC). In roughly 120 BC (before Jesus), there was the famous Maccabean revolt. The newly installed high priest was named John Hyrcanus I (Judas Maccabeus' youngest brother). It was during his reign (when the Maccabees were in charge the dynasty was called the Hasmonean dynasty). A few things happened that were significant: 1.) The Pharisees became a thing (powerful religious group); 2.) The Sadducees became a thing (powerful royal/religious group); 3.) The Edomites/Idumeans were forced to convert to Judaism. What this did was to start blending the Idumeans with the Jews not just religiously but they started to blend in families. This created another half-Jewish group of people (similar to the Samaritan group who were half-Jews).

- Antipater II the Idumean – The Herod line starts with this guy. He was an Edomite/Idumean, relatives of the Jewish people, who rose to power during the Hasmonean kingdom (Maccabee reign). During his lifetime the Roman Empire went through a civil war. Antipater chose to partner with the winning side. He sided with Julius Caesar and even led a military rescue effort for him. Caesar put him in charge of the region of Judea (the new name for Judah tribal land). Eventually Antipater's political moves got him murdered by poisoning but by this time his sons were ruling: Phasaelus ruled Jerusalem as governor, and Herod ruled Galilee as governor (received the role at 15 years old). Herod further secured his role in the region by marrying the Jewish (Hasmonean) princess Mariamne.
- 1.) Herod the Great – it (the Bible narrative) really kicks off with Herod the Great, who was in power when Jesus was born. He was the son of Antipater who was an Idumean and Cypros a Nabatean woman. The Jews hated his mixed ancestry, but he knew the region and culture well. As mentioned above he tried to gain the Jews trust by marrying a Jewish princess (Mariamne). His technical title was Herod the Tetrarch (41BC), yet also declared by Antony "King of Judea". He wiped out the remaining Jewish leadership (Maccabean family = Hasmonean king line) for Rome. Most famously for our notes he was the one to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem to make it the grandest it had been since Solomon. It was his version of the temple that fell in AD 70. Great builder (cities, theaters, gymnasiums, etc.). Notoriously jealous and cruel. Killed his wife (Mariamne) and her sons (Alexander & Aristobulus). He banished two other wives. He reigned for 40 years and died at 70 (AD 2).

- A messed up family tree - Herod the Great had **multiple wives (5) and multiple sons (7)**. It looks like this (and they all seem to have the **same names** and it drives me crazy):
 - 5 Wives = Doris, Mariamne I, Mariamne II, Malthace, Cleopatra.
 - 7 Sons = Antipater III, Alexander, Aristobulus, Herod Philip I, Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Philip II
 - Wife 1 = Doris – she was likely Idumean but was from Jerusalem. Herod the Great married her before he had become king. They had a son = Antipater III. When Herod got the title king, he traded her out for another woman, Mariamne I. She was sent out of the city with her son but later let back in. She was bitter about being replaced and led a plan to execute Herod the Great to get her son on the throne. It didn't work. She was banished again.
 - Wife 2 – Mariamne I – had two famous boys = Alexander & Aristobulus IV. She was a famously beautiful Jewish princess (Maccabee line). She was betrothed to Herod at 12 and married by 17. They were married for 10 years. Herod loved her most out of his wives, but his cruelty (killing her brother and eliminating some of her other family²) drove a wedge between them. Herod's mom and sister hated her and plotted to have Mariamne killed for adultery. Even Mariamne's own mom distanced herself from her in the final days. She went to her **death** calmly and serenely at the **age of 25**. He regretted it and built a tower in Jerusalem to her honor. **Her death infuriated the Jewish people, and they hated him his whole life.** Unfortunately, paranoid Herod later killed her boys for treason.
 - Aristobulus (King of Chalcis) had 3 famous kids before he was murdered by his dad = 1.) Herod of Chalcis; 2.) Herodias the wife of two uncles. 3.) Herod Agrippa I (elder) – see below about him.
 - Wife 3 - Mariamne II – allegedly it was her beauty and her similar name to his last wife that drew Herod to her. Since she was low status and thus unmarriageable to a king, he made her father (Simon) high priest of Jerusalem (also a power/political move³). She was Egyptian and Jewish. She had one son = Herod Philip I. At first Herod the Great put Herod Philip I as the heir apparent, but then found out Mariamne II knew about a plot for his life and didn't tell him. She was banished and son cut out of the will.

² As well as his policy that when he traveled he left a mandate that if he should die, she should be immediately killed so she couldn't remarry. He was extremely jealous.

³ Jewish priesthood was always a lineage (born into it) thing. But Herod shifted that significantly here. He made it a temporary role now and outsiders were allowed to be in it. The biggest political move was demonstrating that all Jewish priests were now under the power of the king. The Jewish people were outraged.

- Herod Philip I – This is the Philip that was **married to Herodias** before she left him for his half-brother Antipas. Before she left they had a daughter Salome.
- Wife 4 – Malthace – she was a Samaritan. She was a revenge wife toward the Jews who were mad at him for his Jewish wife Mariamne I's execution. had two boys = Herod Archelaus & Herod Antipas (see below). Because she was loyal, her boys got the biggest inheritance when Herod the Great died.
 - Prince Herod Archelaus – it was Archelaus that was in power of Judea, when Jesus and his parents were coming back from fleeing to Egypt. In order to avoid him they went north and settled in Nazareth.
- Wife 5 – Cleopatra (not the Egyptian ruler but likely named after her). It is said that Herod didn't love her but respected her. For this reason, her sons were educated in Rome. – had 2 boys = Prince Herod and Prince Herod Philip II (Philip the Tetrarch). Only Prince Herod Philip II was named in the will and he received a good inheritance.
 - Herod Philip II the tetrarch - **This Philip is the one that married his niece, Salome the dancer.** He died childless. Salome moved on and married someone else.
- Division of land and power – When Herod the Great died, **half of the kingdom** (Idumea, Judea & Samaria) was given to Herod's son Herod-Archelaus (named **ethnarch**). The **remaining half was divided between two** of his other sons: **Herod Antipas** (Galilee & Perea) & **Philip** (Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis) - both named **tetrarch**.
- 2.) Herod Antipas the Tetrarch – The son of Herod the Great who **ran the Galilee area** (Northern Israel) – whose mother was Malthace (blood brother to Archelaus) – also had multiple wives and interests.
 - Wife Herodias - His first wife (daughter of Aretas) was dismissed because **he wanted Herodias, his niece, who was married to his brother.** He got her to leave Philip and live with him and eventually marry him. Switching one uncle for another.
 - Herod Antipas' downfall – History tells us that went to Rome (pressured by Herodias) to ask for the title and rank of king, but it didn't go well. Herodias' own brother (Herod Agrippa the elder) accused him in front of Caligula, and **he was banished along with Herodias to Gaul France** (AD 41). His territories were given to Herod Agrippa.
- 3.) Herod Agrippa (elder) – the third in the line of Herods is Herod Agrippa who was just mentioned above. He was Herod Antipas' brother and son of Herod the Great. He got his sister and her husband (Antipas) out and took over their territory. Since they were all related, he too is the grandson of Herod the Great (son of Aristobulus). He got the title king and got all the northern territories (of Antipas, Lysanius,

and Philip). He persecuted Christians (Peter was imprisoned and James was killed in prison during his reign). He was the arrogant Herod who was killed by God due to his pride. "He died suddenly and miserably at Caesarea in AD 44."⁴

- 4.) Herod Agrippa (younger) – this is the Agrippa in the New Testament (Paul was brought before him by Festus). He was the son of the prior Herod Agrippa (elder). He took over at 17 yrs old. Later he was given the title king (AD 53).
 - heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. – Jesus was extremely famous for his 3 year ministry. At first it was primarily in the North, but later the whole nation.
 - Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him."⁵ – The stupidity of this statement is that Jesus and John were contemporaries. They lived at the same time. They were related. Clearly it wasn't that one died, and the other was born and inherited power. And oddly enough about this statement, John the Baptist didn't do miracles, but yet his power was so clearly evident to Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas' main concern was his guilt over killing John the Baptist and the fear of being haunted.
 - But others said, "He is Elijah."⁶ And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."⁷ – The people that didn't know Jesus personally guessed at why he was so powerful and famous. They were putting up some wild guesses. Ironically they went to Elijah, the prophet that was alive roughly 900 years before. He was a Jewish hero. They thought that he had come back to live. Ironically it was John the Baptist who was the Elijah character in the new covenant story (forerunner). Some other people thought that surely this power Jesus had was that he was a reincarnated major prophet from the past. They were all wrong.
 - But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised. – Herod is freaking out with guilt and haunting. He knew he was a loser for cutting off John's head.
- Busted!
 - Mark Reflects on John's Arrest
 - Mk 6:17-18 – "For it was Herod (Antipas) who had sent and seized John (the Baptist) and bound him in prison⁸ for the sake of Herodias, his brother

⁴ Complete Word Study Dictionary of New Testament

⁵ The conviction that Jesus is John risen from the dead comes from a group of people who had no direct experience with Jesus or the Baptist, since they did not know that Jesus was a contemporary of John and had been baptized by him." NICNT

⁶ The opinion that Jesus is Elijah identifies Jesus with "the Coming One" announced by John (Ch. 1:7). It probably reflects the conviction of the Baptist's followers. Although he left the identity of the one mightier than himself unnamed, John had defined his function in terms which pointed unmistakably to "the Messenger of the Covenant," the prophet Elijah, in the closing paragraphs of Malachi (Chs. 3:1f.; 4:5f.). John must have been responsible for communicating to his followers that Jesus was Elijah, as promised in the prophetic word. The identification of Jesus as the precursor to "the great and terrible day of the Lord" was a response of faith which stands in contrast to the popular opinion that Jesus was John risen from the dead." NICNT

⁷ "The name of the returning prophet is not provided, since the people thought alternately of Elijah, Moses, Enoch or Jeremiah." NICNT

⁸ Josephus states that Herod sent John to Machaerus, the southern tip of Perea tangent to the northeast corner of the Dead Sea. The proximity of this area to the Judean wilderness where John seems to have concentrated his mission lends strong probability to the correctness of this

(Herod) *Philip's (I) wife, because he had married her.*⁹ ¹⁸ *For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."*

- ESV Combo Account - **Mt 14:3-12; Mk 6:17-29; Luke 3:19-20 - Luke is black; Matthew is orange; Mark is green**

- *"For it was Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife because he had married her, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he had sent and seized John and bound him and locked up John in prison, for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. 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. 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 before the company and 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, up to half of my kingdom." so that he promised with an oath (vowed to her) to give her whatever she might ask. 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, prompted by her mother, she said, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist here 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) commanded it to be given. He immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and buried it (laid it in a tomb), and they went and told Jesus."*
- For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison¹⁰ – Herod Antipas had arrested John the Baptist and put him in prison. It's not clear what prison was used but it doesn't matter.
- for the sake of Herodias, his brother (Herod) Philip's wife, because he had married her. – Herod Antipas got Herodias to leave his brother and to marry him. It was a **huge scandal** not just because he took his brother's

detail. Mark does not say where John was imprisoned. Because "the first men of Galilee" were present at the banquet, and Jesus' presence in Galilee is the occasion for Herod's disturbed thoughts, it is natural to think of Tiberias in Galilee, the tetrarch's capital. There is nothing in Mark; however, which demands Galilee as the scene of John's imprisonment, and it is proper to read Mark through the eyes of Josephus at this point, placing the scene of the action in Machaerus... When John had ministered on the eastern bank of the Jordan River near Bethany he was in Perea, and it is probable that Antipas had taken him prisoner during a sojourn in this area. The fortress-palace of Machaerus, which served as the military headquarters for the region, was not far from this place." NICNT

⁹ "Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus (the son of Herod and Mariamne), and the niece of Antipas. She was near her fortieth year at the time of her second marriage.⁶⁹ Her union with Antipas was adulterous and shocking because the Mosaic Law clearly prohibited marriage to a brother's wife while the brother was yet alive (Lev. 18:16; 20:21). This flouting of the Law in high places could not but call forth the stern denunciation of the wilderness prophet." NICNT

¹⁰ "Josephus' report that Herod imprisoned and executed the Baptist because he feared a political uprising to which John might give leadership is thoroughly understandable. The territory of Antipas included the narrow strip designated Perea, which bordered on the Nabatean Kingdom. His marriage to Herodias had required the repudiation of a former wife, the daughter of Aretas IV of Nabatea. It is clear, therefore, that John's proclamation of the unlawfulness of Herod's adulterous union could be interpreted as a call to insurrection which threatened the tetrarch from within his province as seriously as did the incensed Nabateans to the east of his province. It should be remembered that Josephus was writing some sixty years after the event for a Roman public who would find in Antipas' desire to suppress a potential public disturbance merely the action of a Roman patriot. Mark, whose interests are very different from those of Josephus, stresses the scheming of Herodias. This emphasis is thoroughly consistent with what Josephus has reported at length concerning the active role played by women and their intrigues in the conduct of Herodian affairs. There is no sufficient reason for doubting the historical accuracy of the Marcan narrative on this account." NICNT

wife, but for the Jews that was against God's law. It was considered incest.

- For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. – **Multiple times in Leviticus** (18:16; 20:21) it says that brothers can't be sexually involved with their brother's wife as long as he is alive. If he dies and there's reason for it they are to marry the widow (Dt 25). The process is called **Levirate marriage**.
 - Luke's Addition – it wasn't just the incestual marriage stuff – Luke wrote that John was put in prison **not just for that but also because John had been public about...**, "*all the evil things that Herod had done (added this to them all)...*"
 - Matthew's Addition – at first Herod wanted to kill JTB – **Matthew includes a line that explains that Herod wanted to kill JTB for all the reasons why he put him in prison but that John was super popular and it would have been bad politically in the moment.** Matthew wrote, "*And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.*" It seems that **while John was in prison, Herod took a liking to him.**
 - John's ministry in prison – It seems that **John was continuing to minister no matter where he was.** It also demonstrates that John was at least winsome enough to win over Herod (John seems a rather harsh guy otherwise, but that may not be true).
- The Grudge
 - Herodias Can't Let it Go and Wants John Dead
 - **Mk 6:19-20** – "*And Herodias [Philip's prior wife] had a grudge against him [John] and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod (Antipas) 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.*"
 - And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death.
 - Herodias hated John because he dared to defy her. She was a proud woman and thought she was untouchable. Who was John to say things about her? She wanted him dead and was going to find a way to do it.
 - Standing up for what's right – there is a cost to doing what is right in the face of evil. The vast majority of early saint leaders paid this price.
 - But she could not, for Herod feared John, - at first it seems that she and her husband were on the same page of killing John but along the way Herod Antipas changed his mind and started protecting John.
 - knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, - At first he didn't kill him due to politics, but now he liked John and respected him. He knew that John was a good guy and didn't do anything wrong. Yet, there's no way that Herod Antipas was going to let him wander around and keep mouthing off against him in society.

- and he kept him safe. – Not just Herodias wanted him dead but likely others. Herod Antipas made him untouchable.
- When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly – Herod Antipas didn't know what to do with John. He was fascinating to him. He didn't understand John's religion or perspective but there was something attractive and winsome about him. He wanted to hear more.
- The Dance of Death
 - Salome Dances for the Head of John the Baptist
 - *Mk 6:21-25 – "But an opportunity [for Herodias to get revenge] came when Herod (Antipas) on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²² For when Herodias's daughter¹¹ (Salome – Antipas' step-daughter) came in and danced, she pleased Herod (Antipas) and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." ²³ And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." ²⁴ And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." ²⁵ 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."*
 - But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. – this was an opportunity for **Herodias to get her revenge. She used her daughter to do it.** There was a HUGE birthday party which was going to get really raunchy. All the famous and powerful guys were there. It's likely that **main women weren't invited, only entertainers.**
 - For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. – Herodias was willing to pimp her daughter out. She's cutthroat. The daughter's name, per history (Josephus) is **Salome**. She came out and all reports and scholars believe this to be a **sensual and sexual dance to fire up the men.** All the guys loved it, including her step-dad.
 - Salome – Josephus wrote that her name was Salome. History tells us that she ended up marrying her uncle Philip (who her mom had divorced), and then later married Aristobulus, king of Chalcis. It's likely that she was named after King Herod I (Herod the Great) sister Salome

¹¹ "Josephus identifies the name of Herodias' daughter as Salome. She was later married to the tetrarch Herod Philip, who was considerably older than she was, and after his death in 34 A.D. to another Herodian named Aristobulus. She was, apparently, in her middle teens at the time of her infamous performance.⁷⁵ That she was not yet married seems clear from the fact that she was still under the influence of her mother; certainly no prince would have permitted his wife to perform artistically before the company of assembled men. The dance was unquestionably lascivious, designed to captivate and further the ends of the dancer. It appears to have had its origins not in a Semitic context but in a distinctly Hellenistic one. The performance pleased both Herod and his guests, perhaps precisely because it was the princess who danced. They had undoubtedly seen professional dancers in the past, but Mark seems to stress that it was actually the daughter of Herodias who performed."

- 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." – This was a way to honor a guest, but it was never really truthful. The king was never going to give up political power to an entertainer no matter who they were. But it was a socially understood thing that if the king says this, it's a freedom to ask for something big and amazing so that he can look good giving it.
- And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." – She checks in with her mom and her mom already had the price. It was the head of John the Baptist. She wanted him dead and wanted proof that he was dead.
 - The power of manipulation- Herodias manipulated her husband and he put himself in a scenario to be manipulated by her. Although we can't control all manipulation from others in our lives, we do have a lot of control in letting them have that proximity to us and have our faith in them to say what they say. We can't control them but we can control our trust in them.
 - 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 – this was a public address and everyone heard it. You have to imagine it was a bit of a buzz kill at the party. They were just all hyped up sexually and she brings in murder and the head of a dude idea. Notice that she isn't playing around about WHEN. She wants it now so that no one can put it off for a later time and get out of it. Herodias, the mom, thought of everything.
- On a Silver Platter
 - John the Baptist is Beheaded
 - Mk 6:26-29 – *"And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. ²⁷ And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison ²⁸ and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb."*
 - And the king was exceedingly sorry, - The manipulation and bad influence control all bit him in this moment. He had grown to really enjoy and care for John the Baptist. He didn't want him dead. He was super sad in that moment and probably frustrated by the whole thing. But now he was stuck.
 - but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. – He was a political power guy which means he only has his influence if he maintains that political power. All the influencers were around him and he couldn't lose face. He had to do it. Herodias made

sure of that. If he chickened out he would lose respect. He couldn't afford that.

- Don't make promises you don't want to keep - Herod should not have made this promise, but he did and he followed through. How many times have we said we were going to do something and regretted it.
We need to think through things before we promise.
- And immediately the king sent an executioner¹² 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. – He did it and did it in the timeframe, during the party. He wanted to be seen as a guy who followed up on his word. So, as gross as that is, it happened and everyone knew that he was a badass. Not sure what they did with it afterward.
- When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb¹³ - **John the Baptist still had followers/disciples.** This intrigues me because although I'm a loyalist to people, JTB was VERY clear that Jesus was the Lamb of God and that he was not. Why would they stay? Perhaps it's just power of loyalty. So, these guys came and got the body (sans head) and made sure he was **honored with a proper burial.**
- Matthew's Addition – **"and they went and told Jesus."** – they knew that this was going to be **personal for Jesus and that He would want to know.**

Conclusion

- What are your influences leading you to? What type of person are they making you?
- Unless Jesus is our primary influencer we are going to be in danger.

¹² "The designation for the guardsman charged with the execution transliterates the Latin form speculator. The speculatores were a well-known division of the imperial guard at Rome. These soldiers served as a police force, and in the pages of Tacitus tend to figure in moments of military intrigue. The use of the Latin term for the guardsman ordered to execute John is appropriate to the context, and offers further illustration of Herod's attempt to pattern his court after the imperial administration." NICNT

¹³ "The death of John, however, did not bring the Baptist movement to an end, nor was this the final time Herod would be forced to remember John. The ministry of Jesus stirred his sober reflection on John whom he had beheaded. Then in A.D. 36 the Nabatean hordes swept down upon him to avenge the humiliation suffered by the daughter of Aretas. They administered a stinging defeat to Antipas which the people interpreted as an act of God avenging the murder of John the Baptist." NICNT