

# When Convicted

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[ 0 : 00 ] Mark chapter 6, the word was out. Jesus was making a radical difference. The difference that Jesus made in lives was amazing. The disciples were being sent out. They're being used in powerful and effective ways.

And the passage that precedes the one that we're going to read speaks of how he sent out the apostles with great effectiveness. And that got the attention of Herod because culture was being affected. Lives were changing and Herod didn't like it. It unsettled him. He was afraid of it. There's so much about it that he didn't understand and he didn't know. Who is this Jesus anyway? John the Baptist was dead. Killed by Herod. And the account we'll read today tells that story. And as Jesus was ministering, some were saying that he must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. And that unsettled King Herod. It greatly concerned him. And our passage tells us why. It's in Mark chapter 6, beginning verse 14, it says this. King Herod heard of it. And that it's talking about is this great movement of God as Christ was affecting people as well as sending out disciples.

[ 1 : 40 ] King Herod heard of it for Jesus name had become known. Some said John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. That's why these miraculous powers are at work in him.

King Herod said he's Elijah. But others said he's 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's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted him put 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.

[ 2 : 35 ] 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' 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'll give it to you. And he vowed to her, whatever you ask, I'll give you.

Up to half of my kingdom. Up to half of my kingdom.

Up to half of my kingdom.

Because of what he had previously done to John the Baptist. Could it be that Jesus is actually John the Baptist that's been raised from the dead?

[ 4 : 18 ] And Mark brings it up to foreshadow what is coming in the crucifixion of Christ. And Herod's role in the crucifixion of Christ.

Now, ironically, Mark does not bring up Herod at the crucifixion of Christ. Luke does. However, Mark obviously references Herod here in light of what's going to happen in the last days of Christ. The account that he gives here is the execution of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was very unique.

He lived in the wilderness. He lived in the wilderness. And where I grew up and where I lived most of my life, the wilderness to me was always the woods. And so when I grew up, I always thought that he was talking about he must have lived in the woods.

Well, when you go to the Middle East, the wilderness is not the woods. It's the desert. And he lived in the desert. And those desert mountains in that area are full of caves.

[ 5 : 23 ] And bandits hide in there. Jesus speaks of that in the story of the man on the road to Samaria.

And he speaks of how thieves and bandits and those type things attacked. They would hide in the caves and those type things. And people who lived, those nomads, would live in those caves. And John the Baptist probably did that very thing. It says that he wore a camel hair coat. We actually have an image of John the Baptist. If you will show them that to him.

That's John the Baptist right there. Actually, he looked more like this. Such a coat is a practicality under the circumstances.

Because camel skin is water resistant. It's warm as desert nights sometimes get cold. But even more than that, it was a symbol.

[ 6 : 22 ] For Zechariah chapter 13 verse 4 identifies such peril as a sign of profit. 2 Kings 1.8 tells us that the prophet of all prophets, Elijah, wore that kind of coat.

Matter of fact, it became such a known mark of identity among prophets that Zechariah warned of false prophets that would wear a hairy cloak in order to make themselves more believable.

And to watch out for them. It was common. And no wonder. When I went out west years ago, I was surprised to see free range horses running in the desert.

It amazed me when I saw them come through town. We were in some Arizona town. But when I went to the Middle East, what I saw run through town were camels. Free range camels.

They're common in the desert. Scripture tells us John the Baptist ate locusts and honey. Why do you eat that? Because that's what you find in the desert. He came preaching repentance and baptizing people with a baptism of repentance.

[ 7 : 33 ] And as they turned from the sin of their heart, they would be clean. And the public physical presentation of that change came through baptism by immersion. Jesus came to him and asked John the Baptist to baptize him.

And he did. And our passage today talks about how he died upon the orders of King Herod. Now, we need to keep our King Herod straight because there's more than one in Scripture.

One was reigning when Jesus was born. And he was crazy. He spent the last 24 years of his life building a desert resort that stands on the high cliffs looking over the Dead Sea called Masada.

And at that retreat, he built three palaces for his wives to live in. He was known, however, to throw unsuccessful soldiers, untrusting servants, and dissatisfying wives off a cliff.

That was his favorite way of killing folk. And I remember going to Masada and walking through those remains and looking out one of those windows that was right on the edge of the cliff wondering, I wonder if he threw anybody out this window because it had no ledge outside of it.

[ 8 : 53 ] He was known for that kind of thing. Psychiatrists say that he had the traits of a paranoid schizophrenic, a dangerous problem when it's unmedicated.

And he died in 4 AD. So he's dead when this account takes place. The Herod that John speaks of is Herod Antipas, which is the other King Herod's son.

And I don't know if he's crazy, but I do know he was in sin, and he was married to a sinful and crazy woman. He had taken her from his brother. And John was preaching very strong at that time, and he gained a lot of attention.

Large crowds went out into the desert to see him. And Mark says all of Judea, that means that whole surrounding area, as well as the city, were going out to see John the Baptist.

So I'm telling you, it was quite a movement. He was gaining a lot of attention. He called sin, sin. And when he preached against the adultery of Herod, the adulteress grew angry.

[ 9 : 59 ] So she set up the opportunity at his birthday party, among all his friends, to have her daughter do a provocative dance in front of him.

And it excited him. And he promised her anything she wanted, like a guy who's drunk too much in front of his friends.

And she got it. He was lustful. He was weak. And John died early because of it. John was a unique man.

And I believe he died, in part, due to poor responses to a powerful conviction. The poor responses came from Herod and his wife Herodias.

The powerful conviction came from the Holy Spirit. I believe Herod Antipas was convicted about his wayward life and wanted the voice that convicts to be snuffed out.

[ 11 : 09 ] And he thought that was John. And John was simply an instrument of the Holy Spirit the whole time. Now let me tell you what we get from this passage today, what I'm aiming at.

By looking at Herod and by looking at his wife, we get a better understanding of what happens when God convicts someone. And my hope is this, that we recognize God's conviction in our life and that we respond in obedience.

I want you to notice some traits of what happens when God convicts. When God convicts, we feel pursued. We feel pursued. When Herod heard that lives were being changed by Jesus and his disciples, he was haunted by the guilt of killing John.

Did John come back to life? What is this? He was freaking out. And what he felt was the pursuit of the Lord. I mean, I'm going to be clear. The Lord was pursuing him as John the Baptist was preaching.

And now that John is dead, that same message continues on. God did not simply stop doing that. As a matter of fact, one theologian of old called God the hound of heaven.

[12:19] Because his spirit just continues to sniff us out no matter what we do, pursuing us with conviction. And that may seem haunting. Not only did it appear that way to Herod and Herodias, but it also appeared that way to David.

David slept with another man's wife and then had her husband put into a situation that would end his life in order for David to cover up his own sin.

And he probably thought he got away with it. But he didn't. And God brought a prophet named Nathan to him. And Nathan told him a story.

And said a man had a lot of sheep, but he went to his neighbor and took the one sheep he had and stole it from him. And David said, show me the man. And Nathan said, you're the man.

And conviction hit David's heart. In his love, God pursues us. And when convicted by the Holy Spirit, we feel that pursuit.

[13:33] Herod thought John was haunting him. He was not. It was the Spirit of God. It was the Spirit of God.

You sense that pursuit when God convicts. But I'll tell you, something else happens when we get convicted. When we get convicted, we often feel hatred.

I want you to notice what it says in Mark 6, verse 19. It says, And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death, but she could not. She had a grudge against him. In reality, she hated him.

Why? Because John the Baptist pulled no punches. He spoke to the heart, and when we are in sin, we don't like people speaking to the heart. More than that, the Spirit probes the heart, and it is natural for us to displace our shame with anger toward God and toward anyone he uses to speak to the heart in a convicting manner.

I believe in Acts, when Stephen was stoned to death for standing up for Christ and for speaking to the heart of the matter in a very powerful sermon, after he spoke so strongly for Christ and spoke so strongly against the religious hypocritical leaders about how they were ignoring their opportunity in Christ, Acts chapter 7 verse 54 tells us that they responded, I want you to listen to this, by becoming enraged, and they ground their teeth at him, and then they stoned him to death.

[15:06] They hated him. And his death was followed by the scattering of saints. They left that place because Christians were dying for their faith, and so they scattered, and when they scattered, a man named Saul, who would later be named Paul, witnessed Stephen's death.

As a matter of fact, gave approval to Stephen's death, which hints at the fact that he may have been the one to order it. But you see, Stephen's death was not enough. He got orders.

He asked for orders to go search out Christians, to find more of them to kill and to imprison. And he was on his way to Damascus to kill Christians when he met the Lord.

I will always be totally convinced that his zeal to kill and to imprison was driven by the conviction in his heart as God was working in his life.

He hated the conviction. He tried to silence the message of the gospel. When he silenced Stephen, he went after anybody else that would share the message of the gospel. That is until he met the Lord.

[16:10] And when he met the Lord forever, he was changed. Why do you think people hate a church that preaches the gospel? There are people that hate a church that speaks to the heart of the matter.

There are people that are vehemently opposed opposed to the church if it speaks against their lifestyle, if it speaks against their choices. Do you know what it could be?

It could be the conviction of the Holy Spirit. God's word gets to the heart of the matter. I want you to see how the Hebrews writer puts it.

Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12, he says this, For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

In other words, the word of God gets to the heart of the matter and people don't like it. When convicted, we also feel fear.

[ 17 : 24 ] Verse 20 tells us that Herod feared John. He even protected John in the beginning. So why was he afraid of him?

Because he was convicted. And God was speaking to him. And when God speaks, he stirs and he shakes the heart. It can be frightening. Think about the disciples when they were in that storm and they were scared.

And Jesus was sleeping in a boat. And they woke up. They woke him up. And when he woke up, he spoke peace and the storm ceased. No longer were they scared of the storm. You know who they were scared of now?

Mark chapter 4 verse 41 says, And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, Who then is this? That even the wind and the seas obey him. Why were they afraid?

Because they knew that they were not holy. And they knew by the power of his presence that they were in the presence of a holy God. When God speaks to the heart, when the spirit convicts, we feel fear.

[ 18 : 27 ] But not only that, when we're convicted, we feel confused. Mark chapter 6 verse 20 says this, When he heard him, speaking of John the Baptist, I want you to pay attention to what this says.

He was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. Do you hear the spiritual struggle that's going on within him?

It gets confusing at times. You bet it is. Do you know why? There's a spiritual battle going on within him. Because he likes what he says. What he says is the truth, but he don't like what he says.

Because what he says is the truth. There's a battle going on, a spiritual battle that is raging within. And I love what the Apostle Paul says about it, because I relate to it so well. You do too, whether you admit it or not.

Romans chapter 7 verse 14 says this, For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions.

[ 19 : 37 ] For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. If I do what I don't want, I agree with the law. That's good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what's right, but not the ability to carry it out. Listen to this next verse.

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep doing. Now if I do what I do what I do, what I don't want, it's no longer I who do it, but it's sin that dwells within me.

Have you ever been there? Our sin nature, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and the battle within will drive an unrepented one batty, it'll get you.

Herod grew perplexed when he heard John. He loved to hear him, but he grew perplexed by it. That's a spiritual battle of wills taking place. That's very real. And let me tell you something.

[ 20 : 52 ] The spiritual battle that is within is much more real than the injustice that we see in the world. the wars that we see in the world, I believe a lot of them are due to the results of spiritual conviction, where people are just trying to shut it out.

It's in the hearts of humans. Conviction will confuse. Not only that, but this. When convicted, we feel sorry.

Herod gave his wife everything she wanted. He killed John the Baptist, and notice what it says in Mark chapter 6, verse 26.

It says, and the king was exceedingly sorry. Listen to this pride. But because of his oaths and his guest, he didn't want to break his word to it.

Ignoring the voice of God will make you sorry. In an effort to cater to the characters in which he was hanging out with, instead of submitting to the Savior, in order to win friends, in order to impress peers, instead of being won over by the Spirit's woes to salvation, it led him to sorrow.

[ 22 : 26 ] To make life-changing decisions while failing to listen to the voice that brings life change will cause you to be sorry. How do you think the rich young ruler felt?

when he asked Christ and then was confronted by Christ, he didn't want to leave his lifestyle and he wasn't willing to leave his lifestyle. Mark chapter 10, verse 22, says that he went away sorrowful. He was sorry. How do you think Peter felt when he heard that cock crow after a night of denying Christ when just hours before he promised that he would never deny Christ?

I'll tell you how he felt. He was sorry. Mark chapter 14, verse 72, says he broke down and wept. The conviction of the Holy Spirit will make you sorry.

Or will it? Why would God cause you to feel that you were being haunted by him? Why would God speak with such power to our hearts that we hate to hear the message?

[ 23 : 45 ] Why would God's voice make us afraid? Why would God's voice cause confusion? Why would God's voice make us sorry? Why would God do such?

God doesn't do that. God speaks. And he gives us opportunity. And everything in our sinful being may fight against that opportunity because of the areas of our life that we want to protect.

The areas of our life that we want to keep doing. The areas of our life that we don't want to give over. And when we do that, refuse.

His opportunity for forgiveness. Refuse his opportunity for repentance. Havoc sets into our lives. I am convinced the two most miserable people on the earth are people under conviction.

That means Christians that need to repent and lost folks that need salvation. And the reality is neither one of them need to be miserable.

[ 25 : 04 ] There's no need to. Because the same God that loves us enough to convict us of the things that we do wrong, the same God that pursues us, the same God that gives us such a heavy weight upon us that it causes all this hate and sorrow and confusion and all these things that it causes within us is the same God, I want you to hear me today, that will accept us exactly like we are this morning and make us exactly like He'd like for us to be when we'll just say, oh dear God, I can't do this on my own.

I'm a fallen man, I'm a fallen woman, I need you, oh God, to forgive me of my sins and to empower me with the Spirit of God to walk away from the patterns of the past, to walk away from the habits that I can't seem to get out of.

Lord, let me to walk in a way that pleases you with all of my life. I'll tell you what He'll do. If you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus, He'll save you today.

He'll meet you where you are and He'll save you today. Don't wait until you clean up your life well enough. You're not going to clean it up well enough. That's why you need a Savior. I'll tell you what else He'll do.

Christian, if you know you're a Christian and you know you've given your heart and life to the Lord, but God's convicting you because of habits and patterns in your life that are not pleasing to Him, you call on Him today and ask Him to forgive you of your sins and to cleanse you and to come into your life and empower you and to change you and to take over the habit, take over the difficulty.

[ 26 : 42 ] God, I repent today. I turn from what I've been doing and I go back to the way I pursue you, oh God, instead of my own ways.

And I thank God today. I wouldn't do what I do if I couldn't tell you this. He'll meet you where you are and He'll make you what He'd have you to be.

Do what God tells you to do. If God's drawing you to Pickens First Baptist Church, you come. If God's leading you to be baptized and to publicly profess your faith that you've only had privately, then you do that today.

If God's telling you to walk away from a pattern in your life that's not pleasing to Him, you lay that down before Him and say, oh dear God, with all your might, Lord, will you help me to walk out of what I'm doing and walk in a way that pleases you.

If you've never given your life to Christ, you come today and say, Pastor, I want to be saved. I want God to change my life and I promise you He will. He'll meet you where you are.

[ 27 : 53 ] Don't leave this place not doing what God tells you to do. We're going to stand and we're going to sing but more important than that. Whether it's at this altar, whether it's at the pew where you are, whether it's for the pastor praying for you, whatever it is, just be obedient to what God tells you to do.

Heavenly Father, I love you. Lord, I'm thankful for the examples that you give us in Scripture that you allow us to learn from so we don't have to do the same thing.

We don't have to find ourselves in the same trap. Help us to walk out of it today, oh God, only by your strength, only through your grace, only by our faith. In Jesus' precious name, amen.  
Amen.