

The Man Who Murdered His Conscience

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Preacher: Rev. Jonathan Currie

[0 : 00] Now let me encourage you tonight if you have your Bible there, let's go to Mark's Gospel chapter 6. I want us to look together for a time this evening at verses 14 through to verse 29.

And if you want a little title to write over the teaching of God's Word in these verses, it's the man who murdered his conscience. The man who murdered his conscience.

Some years back, away in the land of Spain, there was a terrible air disaster when a Spanish mountain ploughed into the side of a Spanish, a Spanish airplane ploughed into the side of a Spanish mountain, instantly killing everyone on board.

And a few months after that terrible accident, when the investigators came along, and when they started to research and to investigate what had happened, they made an eerie discovery.

When they caught the cockpit recorders and the accident black box, just seconds before impact, the plane's automatic warning system had said to the crew, pull up, pull up, pull up.

[1 : 15] And the pilot thinking the system was malfunctioning, he snapped shut up and he turned the system off. And literally just a few seconds later, that huge airplane ploughed into the side of that Spanish mountain, instantly killing everyone on board.

You know, that powerful illustration describes for us the way so many people in our nation tonight are treating their soul's automatic warning system, their conscience.

You know, as we sit in this meeting house tonight, under God's word, the Lord in his grace, the Lord in his common grace, has given to every one of us a conscience. And the tragedy is, in these days in which we're living, many people in Scotland, as in Northern Ireland, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, do you know what they're doing?

They are turning off their consciences. They are ignoring the warning messages that are coming to them from their soul's automatic warning system, their conscience.

You've got a conscience and I've got a conscience. My conscience, we often say in our speech, my conscience wouldn't let me do that sort of thing.

[2 : 33] Or we say, I've got a clear conscience. Or sometimes we say, well, hang on, I've got a guilty conscience. We talk about having a crisis of conscience.

We talk about having our consciences pricked. But let me ask you a question tonight. What exactly is your conscience? I said a little bit earlier that our consciences was our soul's automatic warning system.

It's that ability to sense right from wrong. It's that inner umpire that God in his common grace has given to every single human being.

What do our consciences do? Our consciences encourage us to do what we believe is good and right, and to restrain from doing what we believe is wrong and evil.

Scripture says in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 22, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

[3 : 37] Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1, verse 19, holding faith and a good conscience. I want to ask you tonight, how healthy spiritually is your conscience?

At a special time like this, when many believers maybe have been praying more fervently and more regularly than maybe we do in normal days, and the Spirit of God is moving, isn't it true that often the Spirit of God makes our consciences more sensitive than usual?

How is your conscience tonight? Is your conscience being made more sensitive by the Spirit of God and the Word of God?

Or is your conscience crying out to you, warning messages of the danger your life is in if you're living without Jesus and you're ignoring those warning messages?

I've said it before, the tragedy of what is happening right now under our very noses in the United Kingdom is that many people are switching off their consciences.

[4 : 47] Many people don't want to be troubled anymore about their consciences. They want to live their way and do their own thing. And yet we know there's terrible consequences of living that way.

God in His grace here in Mark chapter 6 tells us three things about Herod's conscience. This was the Herod who ruled in Galilee at the time of Christ's coming to this world.

Let me share with you three things about Herod's conscience. Here's the first thing I see in these verses. Herod was a man who had a troubled conscience. Anyone sitting in this meeting house tonight and if you were being really honest between yourself and the Lord, have you got a troubled conscience?

Let's set the scene of what is happening. One day when Herod was visiting his brother, Herod became infatuated with his brother's wife. He enticed her.

He literally stole her from his brother. And this marriage between Herod and Herodias, it broke the law of God. This adulterous relationship was sinful.

[6 : 03] And yet God who is merciful, God was faithful to the conscience of King Herod. And what did God do? God, we see it in these verses, He sent along this servant of His called John the Baptist with God's truth for Herod.

Look at verse 18. John the Baptist had been saying to Herod, It's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. Now I can just imagine, there was Herod sitting in his royal palace, surrounded by pomp, surrounded by ceremony, and in comes John the Baptist, this fiery preacher, and he certainly doesn't hold back, he just goes for it.

And what does he say? It's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. Now can you just imagine how the royal attendants would rush this troublemaker out of the king's presence?

Can I say tonight, by way of application, our nation could do with a few John the Baptists. I want to say to you, if you're a believer, if you're resting on Jesus for your salvation tonight, is there some situation in your workplace?

Is there some situation in your home where you need to prayerfully and graciously say what God says about sin? Paul says in Romans 1 verse 16, listen to what he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe.

[7 : 35] Is there some situation where you, believer, need to share the gospel with someone in your workplace? Christian, please never be ashamed to say what God says about sin.

I love sitting on airplanes or sitting on a bus or sitting on a train and you just never know in the providence of God who's going to sit down beside you. And I love entering into conversation with people and we talk about the weather and we talk about the economy and we talk about so many things and then people ask me what I do for a living and I love telling them what I do for a living. And I love talking to them even more about the Lord. And what I'm finding is that many people are living life their way and they give no time for this book, this book that's the Word of God.

They have no time for the law of God. And at the end of the day, I am not called to give people my opinion. I am called to be a servant of God's Word and you, if you're saved, are called to be a servant of God's Word.

Just tell people, this is what God says. These are God's standards. This is what God longs for every one of us. You look at your television.

[8 : 55] What was shocking and considered unacceptable only maybe a decade ago is now accepted as norm in our nation. Isaiah chapter 5 verse 20.

Listen to what it says. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.

As our nation's conscience dies, and let's be very clear about it, unless God in His sovereign mercy moves very, very soon, our nation's conscience is critically ill in the United Kingdom tonight.

But as our nation's conscience dies, men and women are going further and further into sin. Romans 1 verse 32 says, Although they know God's righteous decrees, that those who do such things deserve death, they don't only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

So the challenge is, if you know Christ as your Savior, is there a situation where God is calling you to be His mouthpiece and to share His word with somebody?

[10:10] But you know, maybe you're sitting here tonight on this evening service, and maybe recently, and from this pulpit, you've heard the gospel again and again, and recently in the tent, you've been hearing the gospel again and again.

But I want to say to you tonight, if you're not a Christian and you've heard the gospel, let me remind you what you're doing. You are sinning. You are belittling the sacrifice of Calvary.

You are saying to God, God, thank you for the gift of your Son, but Lord, it's not for me, and it's not for now. I find it very, very significant that what did Herod do to John the Baptist?

Look at verse 17. John the Baptist was arrested, bound, and put in prison. And Herod might have arrested John the Baptist, but Herod's conscience kept on troubling him.

His conscience kept on speaking, Herod, that preacher is right. That preacher is telling you the truth. Drop down to verse 20. Look at verse 20. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him.

[11:18] Isn't that amazing? I can picture, here is Herod in his palace. Here is John the Baptist put in prison. And what does Herod do? He is threatened by the message that the servant of God is preaching, and yet he likes to listen to it as well.

Do you know what I believe Herod was doing? Herod was caught between two alternatives. He was caught between the truth that God's servant, John the Baptist, was delivering to him, and his own personal sinful lifestyle.

And I wonder tonight, unknown maybe to many of us, is that where you are right now? You're not a Christian. Here you are in this evening's service, and it's brilliant that you're here, but somehow you're trapped.

On one hand, you're hearing God's word, yet again, as you've heard so often from this pulpit. Maybe you've heard it in the tent. Maybe you've been along. And yet on the other hand, there's your sinful lifestyle.

Your sin that you know needs to be repented of. Your sin that you know needs to be forsaken if you're ever to become a Christian, and if you're ever to find peace with God.

[12:32] Is that where you are? Almost like a spiritual tug of war. You come here, and you hear the gospel, and in a sense you feel a tugging towards the Lord, and then you go back to the sin that's holding you back, and you feel a tugging towards your sin.

And there's that spiritual tug of war taking place right now. Are you here? And you've got a troubled conscience.

Is this your story? Right now, tonight, you've got a troubled conscience. Not only had Herod a troubled conscience, there's a second thing we need to see.

Herod had a trapped conscience. Let's move the story on a little bit. It was Herod's birthday. We read this, and he was having a party, and all the VIPs we would see, say, of the countryside were invited.

And strike up the music. Bring on the wine. Let's eat, drink, and be merry. And in came Herodias' daughter to dance. And King Herod's mind was inflamed.

[13:38] His brain was muddled with wine. His eyes were burning with lust. And he was filled with drunken passion. And what did Herod do? He made a rash promise to this girl.

Look at verse 22. Ask me for whatever you want, and I'll give it to you. And Herod's daughter rushed out to her mother. And remember the text of Scripture says, her mother held a grudge against John the Baptist for denouncing her sin.

Verse 24. What shall I ask for? The head of John the Baptist, she answered. And when the girl came back into the king and said, I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist and a platter, immediately what did Herod have?

He had a trapped conscience. He looked around, and there were his special guests. What would they say if he went back in his word?

And yet in his heart of hearts, he knew that John was a holy, righteous man. He knew that John had told him the truth of God's word. He had a trapped conscience.

[14:46] And let me apply this again tonight. As you sit here this evening, is this you? Have you got a trapped conscience? You know, I know so many people, and I talk to them as a pastor, a Bible teacher, and they say to me, Jonathan, I would just love to become a Christian, but...

And let me share with you some of the buts that they have, but what would my friends say? But what would my husband say? What would my wife say? What would the guy say at work tomorrow

morning?

Is that you? The Bible says in Proverbs 29 that the fear of man proves to be a snare.

Are you snared, trapped by the fear of man? You know that you shouldn't put Jesus off anymore.

You know that Jesus is God's Savior, sent from heaven to deal with the problem of your sin and get you ready for heaven.

You know that God has sent Jesus, and it's only through Jesus that you can ever be saved. But...

What would they say? Would they laugh at me?

[16:00] What would they say? And you know, I've found in nine out of ten times, people don't laugh at you when you become a Christian. They secretly admire you.

They secretly admire you. I find it so sad that Herod did not fear to commit adultery. Herod did not fear to put God's servant, John the Baptist, in prison.

He did not fear to ignore God's call through John the Baptist. But he did fear to obey his conscience and do the right thing and turn his life over to the Lord.

I don't know what's going on in your life right now. But I do know that I meet many people and they have got a trapped conscience.

I know we're living in a day when many people have access like never before to the internet and there's such good stuff on the internet, but there's such trash on the internet as well.

[17:06] And the challenge is are you trapped by something that you've been looking at on the internet that you shouldn't have been looking at on the internet? Is there someone here and you are trapped and you're living a double life?

You come here in the Lord's day and you go through the appearances, the outer appearances and everybody thinks you've got it all sorted out spiritually, but you're living a double life. A trapped conscience.

Is that you? Tonight. Herod had a troubled conscience. Herod had a trapped conscience. But thirdly, Herod had a tormented conscience.

If we go back up the chapter again of chapter 6 of Mark's Gospel and we go to verse 14. Look at verse 14. King Herod heard about this for Jesus' name had become well known.

Some were saying John the Baptist has been raised from the dead and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him. You see, one day, news of Jesus makes its way somehow into Herod's palace.

[18:15] And when Herod hears this news, instantly, look what he thinks. Verse 16, John, the man I beheaded has been raised from the dead. Herod was tormented because he was aware of his personal responsibility.

Herod was a hounded, tormented man. We've all watched those movies and television and often they're focusing on a concentration camp either during the First World War or the Second World War and somebody manages to escape the Germans.

And maybe that person escapes into the woods or escapes for a couple of days but what does the Germans do? What do the enemy do? They send out the hounds and those dogs go after that person who's escaped and those dogs hound them down.

Can I ask you tonight, are you hounded? Hounded by a tormented conscience? Hounded by skeletons in your cupboard?

Hounded by things you did in your youth that you never repented of? Romans 3.23 says, For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

[19:32] You know, the devil who is the father of lies tells us, well, it's only a little one. Sure, everyone else is doing it. Where is the harm in it?

In our church back home, there's a young guy and a few years back he made a profession and let me stress, sadly, it was just an empty profession.

It wasn't real. And very soon he went back to his previous lifestyle that he had had before he made this profession. And what he had done before he made this profession was he was a bouncer or he was a doorman at nightclubs in Northern Ireland.

And he went back to that sort of lifestyle. But he didn't want me to find out because I was meeting with him on a regular basis trying to disciple him, trying to encourage him spiritually. But late one night I got a text message from this guy.

And the text message read, don't tell Jonathan Curry that I was working last night at and named the nightclub where he works. You see, he had gone through his contacts on his phone and he sent the

text message to the wrong person to me rather than to somebody else.

[20 : 52] You know, the Bible says be sure your sin will find you out. Sin has its payday.

Psalms 51 verse 5 says I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. I wonder tonight are you hounded by your conscience this evening?

And if you are, you know what the answer is? It's not a few tablets from the doctor. It's not trying to suppress it and push it to the back of your mind.

Here is God's remedy for troubled and trapped and tormented consciences. Isaiah 1 verse 18 Come now let us reason together says the Lord though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow though they are red as crimson they shall be like wool.

Or here is God's remedy John 7 verse 37 If any man is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Or here is God's remedy John 6 verse 37 Whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

[22 : 07] can I say to you tonight just spill the beans to the Lord He's the only person that needs to know pour it all out to the Lord and repent of it tonight and forsake it and the Lord will forgive you.

You know the last biblical picture of Herod in scripture is found over in Luke 23 let me take you there Luke 23 verses 8 and 9 let me read you those verses Luke 23 8 and 9 When Herod saw Jesus he was greatly pleased because for a long time he wanted to see him for what he had heard about him he hoped to see him perform some miracle he plied him with many questions but Jesus gave him no answers Wow I read Luke 23 and I think to myself initially well Herod this is your big opportunity Herod you have this conscience that's annoying you just tell Jesus all about it tell it all to Jesus tell Jesus about your troubled and your trapped and your tormented conscience admit your sin to Jesus and leave it with Jesus and repent and yet the Bible says

Jesus answered him not one word why was that do you ever ask yourself that question Herod was the only man in scripture that Jesus refused to speak to why because Jesus had said everything he needed to say to Herod through his servant John the Baptist and Herod's conscience was long since dead and buried let me put it like this Herod had sinned away his last opportunity isn't that solemn tonight folks isn't there a seriousness of being a people as privileged as you folks are here in the free church in Barvis and you hear the gospel and you live in the midst of gospel light again and again but it's a serious thing to hear the gospel and put it off again and again because Jesus met Herod Herod plied Jesus with many questions and Jesus didn't say a word to him because Jesus had said all he wanted to say to Herod and Herod's conscience was long since dead and buried are you troubled tonight is your conscience being stirred tonight and if it is thank the Lord that God is still speaking are you here and your conscience is just troubled about many things and if that's you let me finish tonight with the good news you are an ideal candidate for God's salvation there's a God who loves you there's a God who knows the worst about you and the worst about me and he wants us to come with all those things that trouble our consciences and repent of them and forsake them and leave them at the cross are you here tonight and you've got a trapped conscience do you find yourself saying oh if only

I'd kept the big mouth closed if only I wasn't there that night if only I hadn't got involved listen the Lord knows all the details tell the Lord all about it and watch him as he sorts that situation out for his glory are you here tonight and you've got a tormented conscience you put your head on the pillow and somehow there are those things that torment you and they come again and again and again and you toss and turn at night and you say can I not get rid of this is there no escape what will I do am I a hopeless case no you're not a hopeless case there's a place called Calvary and it's a Calvary that the son of God came and that the son of God bled and died and who did he do that for he did that for people who have troubled consciences he did that for people who have trapped consciences he did that for people who have tormented consciences so I'm just saying to you tonight listen if you're disturbed uneasy somehow uncomfortable about spiritual things

[27 : 14] God is speaking and if God is speaking you need to respond again and again scripture says this today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart do you hear his voice tonight speaking to you through your conscience do you and if you do then come to the cross trust him this evening speak to your pastor speak to Donnie or some of us folks in the tent and it would be our absolute privilege to point you to Jesus what did Herod do folks he murdered his conscience what is happening in our nation this is the scary thing our nation is turning off her conscience that's where we've got to in the

United Kingdom turning off their conscience and going further and further and further into sin but there's grace and there's mercy with God if only we'll come and cry out to him will you do that

tonight and trust him as your Lord and your saviour let's just pray together father we're so very much aware tonight that the United Kingdom is very quickly and very definitely and defiantly turning off her conscience we're very aware in our nation tonight Lord that men and women are going further and further into sin and Lord even in the last decade things that we wouldn't even have talked to our closest friends about they're flaunted in the television screens they're talked about in chat shows the famous and the rich go on television and the glory and the sordid details of what they've been up to and Lord we've got to the stage where there's no shame and sin anymore but there's pride and sin rather than shame but Lord we thank you that you are a God scripture says who is rich in mercy we thank you that Micah said you're a God who delights to show mercy and Lord in wrath remember mercy on our nation tonight and Lord we want to pray if there's anyone here who's got a troubled conscience or a trapped conscience or a tormented conscience Lord that you'll speak to them this evening and Lord we thank you that the remedy for a conscience is troubled the remedy is the cross the remedy is the blood of Jesus we thank you that the little chorus says what can wash away my sin nothing but the blood of Jesus Lord we just pray tonight if there's someone that you're speaking to if there's someone and they're uneasy if there's someone and their sin is troubling them Lord that you would give them the grace to flee from the wrath to come and run into the arms of the Savior who is mighty to save Lord hear us we pray we pray this prayer for the glory and the honor of Jesus Amen as we close this time of worship we're going to sing from Psalm 51 Psalm 51 as you know was written by David when he certainly had a troubled conscience and God very graciously came to him and forgave him

Psalm 51 verses 7 through to 12 and it's on page 282 that's Psalm 51 starting at verse 7 do thou with hyssop sprinkle me and I shall be cleansed so verses 7 through to 12 of Psalm 51 let's rise and worship God do thou with hyssop sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so yea wash the me and then I shall be whiter than the snow of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice that so is the bones which love has broken may rejoice■

All mouth■■■■■■■ has choices many can tell my Lan heart Arise with me within Cast me not from thy sight Nor take thy oldest bread away Restore me thy salvation's joy With thy free spirit me stay [33 : 40] So Father we thank you that you have spoken to us through your word tonight And Lord we know that we need to respond and we can't respond Unless you give us the very grace to respond And we just pray Lord that you would give people grace to respond To the word of God and the call of Christ and the gospel tonight Lord we pray that people will not go home With a troubled or a trapped or a tormented conscience We thank you that Jesus is the remedy Jesus has the answer The blood of Jesus can deal with that conscience that disturbs us So Lord we pray that people here Would have very definite dealings with the Lord Jesus tonight So that Jesus will have all the glory and all the honor Go with us and part us with your blessing In Jesus our Redeemer's name we pray this prayer Amen Amen