

Herod's Birthday Present

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this morning, with the Lord's help, turn back to the first portion of Scripture that we read in Mark's Gospel, continuing our study of this Gospel.

Mark chapter 6, and we read at verse 21. Mark chapter 6 at verse 21.

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 will give it to you. And he vowed to her, Whatever you ask me, I will give you up to half my kingdom.

And she went out and said to her mother, For what should I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

[1 : 05] And looking at this scene in Mark's Gospel, and all that's going on, it would be maybe safe to say that it's not too dissimilar from the events which often take place in the 21st century soaps, EastEnders and Coronation Street.

Because what we're confronted with here in Mark's Gospel is adultery, hatred, revenge, sex and murder. And it's all here on the pages of Scripture.

It's all there. But unlike the soaps which flood out TV screens from week to week with fictional stories and fictional characters that revolve around a small community, this isn't fiction.

This isn't a novel. This is the truth. Because this is the truth of God's Word. And it's the truth of what happened to one of God's prophets, John the Baptist.

And it's an awful story. It's a gruesome story about a Gospel preacher who was beheaded for presenting the truth. And looking at this passage, it seems that Mark inserts this small interval during the ministry of Jesus, in which he moves our focus away from following Jesus and his public ministry to looking at this forerunner, the forerunner and precursor to Jesus, who was John the Baptist.

[2 : 41] Because last week, as we saw, we saw Jesus coming to his hometown of Nazareth. And he was preaching to his own people. And we saw that Jesus, well, he wasn't received by his own people.

They rejected his message. And that had been maybe the trend pretty much throughout his initial stages of his ministry. Many people were rejecting him.

And since the opening chapter, Mark has been following closely the ministry of Jesus. He's been following him as if he's a press reporter, you could say, in which he's followed Jesus everywhere.

Whether he was going to the house of a disciple or he was going into the synagogue or Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee. Mark was there. Mark was present and he was reporting to us what Jesus has been doing, what he's been doing and with whom Jesus has been meeting.

And he's been telling us about all the people Jesus has healed and all the parables Jesus has told. And all the places which Jesus traveled to.

[3 : 46] But now in this section, it's as if the camera which has been following Jesus all the time, it's now shifting. And it's shifting to a completely different scene and one in which Jesus is not part of.

Because the scene which Mark now presents to us in this section, it delivers to us the information on what happened to John the Baptist. We haven't heard anything about John the Baptist since chapter 1 of Mark's Gospel.

In the opening verses of his account, Mark had followed John the Baptist. And he'd told us all about John baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance.

And prior to this chapter, all that Mark has told us about John the Baptist is that he was in the River Jordan and that he had baptized Jesus. And that it was at the baptism of Jesus that we last saw John.

He seems to have gone off the radar at that point. He seems to have disappeared. And it was from that point that Mark's focus shifted. It shifted from John to Jesus.

[4 : 55] And he started following Jesus. But Mark explained in chapter 1 why his focus had changed. Because he told us there that John was put in prison.

And Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. And that's all we were told. All we're told is that John, well, he was put in prison. But at this point in his Gospel, Mark begins to fill us in on what happened to John the Baptist when he was put in prison.

And Mark tells us that it was an awful end for the prophet of the Lord in which he was beheaded. But what's interesting about this passage is that this passage is not actually about John the Baptist.

Yes, he's a key feature and a crucial character in the account which is given. Yet, when Mark is reporting on John the Baptist, he's actually wanting to draw our attention to Herod.

He's wanting to draw our attention to the murderer of John the Baptist, King Herod. Because King Herod's grave concern was that John the Baptist, that Jesus was, in fact, John the Baptist raised from the dead.

[6 : 14] Because Herod says in verse 16, where he hears about Jesus and all the miracles that Jesus is performing. And Herod says, this is John. This is John whom I beheaded and he is now raised from the dead.

But the reason Herod was afraid was because his conscience was bothering him. He felt guilty for the death of John the Baptist. He never got over what took place at his birthday party.

And he thought his past was coming back to haunt him. But the frightening thing was that his past was coming back to haunt him. And so this morning I want us to focus upon this character, King Herod.

And his conscience that was bothering him. And I want us to see that King Herod should have listened to his conscience. He should have listened to his conscience.

But as we look at this passage, I want us to look at it in chronological order. In the order in which it happened in history. Because verses 14 to 16, they are the present tense.

[7 : 21] They are further on when Jesus was preaching throughout the region of Galilee. But from verse 17 onwards, Mark presents to us this sort of flashback.

Where he goes back in time, back in his memory. And he recounts what happened when John was put in prison. And as we look at this section chronologically, we see a progression in Herod.

We see where his conscience is ignored. And his heart is hardened. His conscience is ignored and his heart is hardened.

And so the first thing I want us to see here is fearful Herod. There are three things I want us to see. But the first thing is fearful Herod. Fearful Herod. Fearful Herod.

If we look at verse 17. For it was Herod who had sent. This is him going back in time. It was Herod who had sent and seized John. And bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias.

[8 : 22] 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 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. When he heard him. He was greatly perplexed.

And yet he heard him gladly. And so when Mark brings us back in time. To tell us what actually happened to John the Baptist. He brings us to the palace in Jerusalem.

And he not only tells us about the event. But he also tells us what the circumstances were. That led up to the death of John the Baptist. And as Mark gives his historical documentary.

You could say. He makes it clear. Herod arrested John the Baptist. And bound him in prison. Because of this woman called Herodias.

[9 : 21] And Mark indicates to us that this woman Herodias. She wasn't actually Herod's wife. She was the wife of Herod's brother Philip. Which means that Herodias was Herod's sister-in-law.

And what we know of the history of this broken family. Is that Herod had divorced his first wife. In order to marry his brother's wife. And of course by committing adultery with your brother's wife.

It would inevitably cause you to be enemies. And make for yourself enemies. Because his brother would have detested him. And hated him for his actions.

But not only that. The family of his first wife wouldn't have been best pleased either. In fact Herod's first wife. She was the daughter of a king.

The king of a neighbouring nation. That was a powerful nation. That was threatening to invade Israel at the time. But to top it all the Jews.

[10 : 21] They would have hated the fact that their Herod of their land. Was willingly and freely breaking the laws of God. And Herod he's a lesson to us all.

That our actions. They will always have a ripple effect. We may think that our actions will only affect our personal situations. And our personal circumstances.

But the reality is that everyone around us. And even those who are part of our community. And part of our church. They'll also be affected. But with Herod. What seems to worry him most.

And cause his conscience the most concern. Was not his brother. Or his ex-wife's family. Or even the Jews. They didn't bother him. What caused him most concern.

Was this wilderness preacher. John the Baptist. Because Mark tells us in verse 18. That John had said to Herod. It's not lawful for you.

[11 : 22] To have your brother's wife. And what really got to Herod. And made Herodias want to kill John. Was the fact that John the Baptist. Had made their sin public.

Unlike most people. They don't like their sins to be. Splashed about in the newspapers. And made public. And pointed out to everyone. Because the shame of being exposed.

Is often stronger than the guilt. That was brought on by the wrongdoing. And apparently it was. It was no secret. That John had rebuked. The king and his wife.

For their adulterous actions. And because John was addressing. Their public sin publicly. Herod was concerned. That John's preaching.

Would bring a revolt. And so he wanted John silenced. Instead of confessing their sin. And addressing the issue. And righting the wrong. The adulterous couple.

[12 : 18] Sought to silence John. All together. And Herodias. Well she wanted him dead. But Herod. He couldn't bring himself. To go that far.

His conscience. Wouldn't allow him. To kill John the Baptist. He couldn't have. John. Constantly reminding people. About his sin. But at the same time. He was afraid.

To kill John. Because he felt. That he couldn't. Consciously kill. One of the Lord's. Prophets. And because of. Herod's. Tender conscience. There was tension.

Between this happy couple. Where John was always. The divisive talking point. You never brought him up. When you were. In a conversation. Between Herodias. And Herod. They didn't see eye to eye.

When it came to. Silencing God's. Spokesman. But regardless. Of her opinion. Herodias knew. That she couldn't. Overrule. Her husband. She certainly.

[13 : 13] Had a grudge. Against John. And she wanted. Him to suffer. For revealing. All their sins. And pulling them. Into the public eye. She wanted John. To be silenced. For all.

For once. And for all. But she couldn't. She couldn't do it. Because Herod. Feared. John. Herod.

Feared. John. And Mark. Tells us. That Herod. Feared. John. Because he knew. That John. Was a righteous. And a holy.

Man. Therefore. He protected. John. He protected. Him. Herod. Herod knew. That John. Was different. He knew. That there was something. Special.

About this. Preacher. He knew. That there was something. Unique. About John. Something. Righteous. Something. Holy. He was distinct. He was separate. He wasn't like all the others.

[14 : 07] And Herod knew that. Herod knew. That John. Was different. Not only by what he said. But by also. The way in which. He lived his life. John's. Character.

And John's. Conduct. It spoke to Herod. And Herod knew. That John. John. John. Was someone. Who belonged. To God. He knew. That he was God's servant. He knew.

That he was God's messenger. And because. Of who John was. And what John said. Herod respected. John. He feared John. He thought highly of him.

He considered him. To be a man. Of his word. And he knew. That John. John spoke the truth. Not only because he was. God's prophet. But because he was willing.

To risk his life. In order to present. The truth of God's word. To the king. And although on the one hand. Herod. Couldn't stand John.

[15 : 01] Because he. Repeatedly. Highlighted all his sins. But. On the other hand. Herod. He was drawn to him. Drawn to him. And he. He wanted. To listen to him.

He wanted. To hear more. Of what. John had to say. And be. Be challenged. By John. And listen. To the message. Which John. Repeatedly. Presented.

And Mark. Tells us. He heard him gladly. He heard him gladly. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough.

And you know. How many people. Are like. King Herod. In this. How many of you. In here today. And in our community.

And throughout. Our island. Are like Herod. Where you have this. Respect. Towards the church. And you respect. The ministers. Of the gospel. And you respect.

[15 : 58] The elders. And you respect. The members. Of the church. Because. Well you can see. That they're different. There's. You know. There's a change. That has taken place. In their life. You know. What they live for.

You know. What they stand for. You know. What they represent. And you know. That it's the truth. And you respect them. You wouldn't want. To upset anyone. In the church. Because you respect.

The church. Because you know. That's. That's the way. That you have been brought up. That's what. You've been taught. That's what you've. Come to know. For yourself. You respect.

The things of God. And like Herod. You like enjoying. Hearing about. The things of God. Too. You like coming. To church. And you like being.

In the house of God. And you enjoy. Church. And you have this desire. To. To hear more. About God's word. And you love. To come to church. To. To read the Bible.

[16 : 53] But every time. You come. You find. That this Bible. It's reading you. And it's explaining. Your life. And it's. It's telling you. That you're a sinner. In need. Of a savior.

Telling you. That you need. To change your ways. And seek the Lord. And the more you hear. And the more you read. The Bible. You know deep down. That this is the truth.

You know deep down. That this is truth. You know it's right. You know that you need. To change. You know that your life. Needs to be transformed. You know that. You need to come out.

On the side of the Lord. But is that enough? Is that enough? Is it enough? Is it enough? Just to know. That you have to do it.

Was it enough? For Herod. To enjoy. Being challenged. By John. Was it enough? For him. To know. That he was a sinner. In need of a savior. Was it enough?

[17 : 48] To be urged. And pleaded with. By God's servant. To repent. And believe in the gospel. Was it enough? And is it enough? For any of you.

To just enjoy. Being challenged. By the word. And for. A preacher. To plead with you. To change your ways. Is it enough?

My unconverted friend. Is it enough? To be reminded. That if you continue. In the direction. That you're going. You are going.

To eternity. In hell. I cannot put it. Any clearer. Than that. That's. The reality of it.

It will be. Eternity. In hell. And my friend. Hell. Is a real place. And real people. Go there. But does that do anything to you?

[18 : 48] Does that have any effect on you? Does that cause you. Any concern. That you're lost. That you're in need of a saviour.

Does it bother you? Does your heart bother you? Or will you do as you've always done? And do what Herod did.

Will you just silence the conscience. Until the next opportunity. But for Herod.

That opportunity. Never came. Fearful Herod. But secondly.

We see foolish Herod. Foolish Herod. Look at verse 21. An opportunity came. When Herod on his birthday.

[19 : 44] He 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 will give it to you. And he vowed to her. Whatever you ask me. I will give you. Up to half my kingdom. And she went out. And said to her mother. For what should I ask?

And she said. The head of John. The Baptist. Herod thought he could spend his life. Listening to John. Preaching the truth.

And for John. To remind him. Of his need of Jesus. And his need. To seek the Lord. For as we've seen. Herod. He feared John. He respected John. And his stance for the truth.

And he enjoyed listening to John. Preaching to him. And presenting the gospel to him. And as a king. Herod thought that he would have had.

[20 : 41] Many more opportunities. To listen to his favorite preacher. But that wasn't to be. Because all his opportunities. They were taken from him.

He was to be given no more opportunities. For it was now. The opportunity of Herodias. To do what she had long waited for. To silence John the Baptist forever.

And there's the contrast between this happy couple. Herod wasted many opportunities. To change his life. When he was listening to John.

He wasted them. But Herodias. She took the one opportunity. She was given. To change her life. By silencing John.

And her only opportunity came. On Herod's birthday. And as with most birthdays. It's a day for celebration. A day for rejoicing.

[21 : 40] It's a day for recording the milestones in one's life. It's a celebration of the day that they were born. But for Herod. Herod his birthday. Was John's death day.

For the day on which John was murdered. Herod was to be given no more opportunities. To hear the gospel. The death of John. Resulted in no more opportunities.

To be given to Herod. And what I believe so many people. Take for granted. Not only in here. But throughout our community.

And throughout our island. Is that they think that they will have. A later opportunity. They think that. They will be. This have this.

Other opportunity. In which they. They can come and respond. To the message of the gospel. But what we see here. Is that. That opportunity. Will not always be there.

[22 : 40] My friend. You will not always be able to come to church. You will not be given. Endless opportunities. Because they will come.

To an end. And like it was with John. Death. Will always result. In no more opportunities. Being given.

When death comes. All opportunities go. When death comes. All opportunities go. But what's clear about this passage.

Is that Herod. Didn't know that he had been given. His last opportunity. He never thought that death. Would come. And that all his opportunities. Would go. Prior to his birthday.

Herod didn't know that. His birthday would be the last opportunity. To hear the gospel. And foolish Herod. He had foolishly wasted all.

[23 : 38] His opportunities. And looking at this man. Who had everything that life could give him. He had sat under sermon. After sermon.

After sermon. Of God's sent messenger. And he foolishly. Wasted all. His opportunities. And how many Herods are in here today.

How many Herods. Are in here today. Wasting their opportunities. To come to Christ.

How many are in here this morning. Choosing to waste this occasion. While sitting under the gospel. How many of you are in here. Today.

And you're like foolish Herod. Where you're going to waste yet another. Opportunity. To come to Christ. For your salvation. My friend.

[24 : 35] The only advice I have for you. Is don't do it. Don't do it. Don't waste your opportunities. Because when death comes.

Opportunities go. Opportunities go. Because this foolish Herod. He not only wasted his opportunities. Not only wasted every opportunity.

He was given. He also foolishly remained silent. And he refused to stand up for what was right. And his wife knew his weakness.

Herodias knew that Herod would never stand up for John. In front of everyone else. And so she took her opportunity. Her golden opportunity. On Herod's birthday.

Because on Herod's birthday. He would give a feast. And he'd call all his nobles. All his officers. All the chief men of Galilee. They were all to be there. All the high flyers of the region.

[25 : 38] They're invited to Herod's birthday bash. And they're all there. Everyone's there. And they're all trying to boost their own egos. And enjoy their own pomp and ceremony.

With all their feasting. And all their drinking. And all their partying. They're all there. Everyone's there. They're all getting drunk at Herod's expense. And as they ate.

And as they drank. And got more drunk. The opportune time finally came. For Herodias to make her move. And so she sends out her daughter.

Not Herod's daughter. But Philip's daughter. Herodias' first husband. Philip. It was his daughter. And she sends her out.

To dance in this explicit. And seductive manner. Before all these drunk men. And it pleased Herod. And all his drunk dinner guests.

[26 : 34] And looking at this. We can see that there was. A battle going on in Herod's heart. He's in the midst of all the drink. And all the partying. But what's going on.

Is this battle. Between following the world. And following the Lord. And it's a battle. Which many people have. Between choosing to follow the world.

Or follow the Lord. Because we're told. That the message. Which John preached. It made Herod glad. And because it made Herod glad.

He wanted to hear more of the gospel. He enjoyed. Hearing the preaching of God's word. But the pleasures of the world. They also pleased him. They also brought him.

Some sort of satisfaction. And enjoyment. And he couldn't let go of them. He could never sever his ties. With them. And that's the battle. Many people have.

[27 : 29] The battle. Between following the world. And following the Lord. But as the alcohol flowed. At Herod's birthday party. It gave Herod a boldness.

That he would never have had. That's what alcohol always does. It makes people bold. And it makes people say things. That they will regret. And Herod is going to regret.

What he says next. Because he says to his dancer. The daughter of Herodias. He says to her. Ask me for whatever you want.

And I'll give it to you. And he swore to her. Saying whatever you want. Whatever you ask me. Up to half of my kingdom. You can have it. And there it was.

There it was. There it was. There was the golden opportunity. That Herodias had waited for. And it was just gifted to her. Her drunk husband.

- [28 : 27] Just spouting forth. And finally. Herodias was going to get her way. And so her daughter comes to Herodias. And says. What should I ask for? What should I say?
- Herodias says. Ask for the head. Of John the Baptist. Ask for his head. And it says in verse 25. And she came in. Immediately with haste to the king.
- Running. And asked him. Saying. I want to give. I want you to give me at once. The head of John the Baptist. On a platter. And when Herod heard these words.
- His heart sank. His heart sank. The holy. And godly man. He had protected. For so long.
- Was now to meet his end. The man who had. Challenged his conscience. Was to be silenced completely. And Herod not only knew. That his request.
- [29 : 26] Was initiated. Initiated by his wife. He knew it was game over. He knew that it was checkmate. He knew that. He couldn't refuse this request. Because he had promised.
- To the daughter of Herodias. Up to half his kingdom. But all she wanted. Was a beheaded man. All she wanted. Was a decapitated head. And he dared.
- Refuse her. All his guests. Are watching. They'd all heard. Herod's drunken boast. And they. Had heard the awful. Request. Herod was stuck.
- He couldn't move. He had foolishly tried. To impress all of his guests. But it had completely. Backfired on him. He didn't want. To deny this girl. His request.
- He didn't. He didn't want. To come across. As someone. Who had a soft spot. For John the Baptist. He didn't want anyone. To know. That he enjoyed. The preaching. Of God's word.
- [30 : 21] He didn't want anyone. To know. That there was a battle. Going on. In his heart. And as king. He had the authority. To say no. He had the opportunity.
- To deny the request. He had the final opportunity. To stand up. For what is right. But he didn't take it. And Herod was so sorry.
- Because he knew. That he was being foolish. He knew. That he was making. The wrong decision. He knew. That the message of. John the Baptist. He knew it was the truth. But the fear of man.
- The fear of man. Made him go through with it. And he silenced his conscience. Because he worried about.
- What others thought of him. He refused to stand up. For the cause. Which John stood for. Because he was afraid of the crowd. Afraid of all his friends.
- [31 : 21] And I think there are some people. Who are like that too. Where you know the right thing to do. You know what the Bible says.
- You know that you need to be saved. You know that you need Jesus. As your saviour. And you've had. Many opportunities. To come out.
- On the side of the Lord. But like Herod. It's fear that keeps you back. Who you think. What will people say.
- If I start going to the prayer meeting. What will they say. If I start coming to church. Twice in one day. People will talk about me. The community will be.
- Will be saying things about me. What will others think. If I start following the Lord. What will my family say. What will my husband say. What will my wife say. What will my friends say.
- [32 : 21] My friend. Please. Please. Please. Please. Don't let that stop you. Don't let that stop you.
- Don't let the fear of others. Keep you back. And I say all that. Because I know what it's like. I asked all these questions myself.

When I wanted to become a Christian. I feared what others would say. I worried about what they would think of me. But you know.

The people I feared the most. They were the greatest support. And when I started following the Lord. The response of one of my closest friends was.

I wish it was me. I wish it was me. My friend. Don't be foolish. Don't pass up your opportunities.

[33 : 23] Don't let this opportunity go by. Don't be foolish. And allow the fear of man. And the fear of people. To swallow you up. And to stop you.

From coming and following the Lord. You come. You come and you follow. This Christ. Because you will never regret it. You will never regret it.

The best life now. And it's there for you. Fearful Herod. Foolish Herod.

Lastly we see faithless Herod. Faithless Herod. If we go back to verse 14. King Herod heard of it. For Jesus his 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. But others said he is Elijah. And others said he is a prophet. Like one of the prophets of old.

[34 : 23] But when Herod heard of it he said. John whom I beheaded. Has been raised. And by going back to these verses. We're bringing ourselves up to present day as it were.

In the life and ministry of Jesus. And everything we've looked at already. It's in the past. Herod's birthday was long over. John the Baptist was long dead.

But Herod he never forgot what took place on his birthday. He never forgot that birthday party he had held in the palace. He never forgot his missed opportunities.

He never forgot his decision to have John the Baptist beheaded. And looking at these verses. And Herod's response to hearing about the miracle worker in Galilee.

It becomes obvious that the events of his birthday they plagued his mind. They never left him. He never got over them. He continually regretted it.

[35 : 24] And on hearing about Jesus. And all the powers of healing the sick. And cleansing the lepers. And calming the storms. Herod thought that he was coming back from the dead to get him.

He thought he was coming back to haunt him. That the past was going to come back and get him. Because in the palace everyone was discussing and wondering.

Who's this powerful miracle worker? And everyone's asking who is he? And how does he do all these miracles? And Herod he just says. This is John. This is John whom I beheaded.

He has been raised from the dead. And in that statement Herod admits. And he confesses that he was responsible for John's death. He doesn't blame his deceitful wife.

He doesn't say that she tricked him. He blames himself for the death of God's servant. And Herod is convinced that this is John the Baptist. Who has come back from the dead to seek revenge for his murder.

[36 : 27] But everyone in the palace. They continue to debate over the identity of Jesus. Some of them are saying. Well it's not John the Baptist. Back from the dead. It's Elijah. And others were saying.

Well it's Jesus. He's the prophet. Or he's like one of the prophets. And the truth is. They didn't really know. No one could provide a concrete answer.

As to the identity of Jesus. And in this scene in the palace. They're all asking. Who is Jesus? Who is he? Who is this miracle worker from Galilee? Who is he?

He's convinced. But Herod. He's convinced. This is John. This is John. He's adamant. John is coming to take revenge on him.

And he repeats the statement again. In verse 16. This is John. Whom I beheaded. He has been raised from the dead. And there is fear. In Herod's words.

[37 : 22] He's afraid of this man. This prophet. Who's going to come to him. And he's convinced that John the Baptist. Is going to come and condemn him.

But all that was haunting. And condemning Herod. Was his conscience. His conscience was bothering him.

And isn't it amazing. That after all this time. His conscience was still bothering him. And that his conscience was bothering him. Because.

He hadn't listened to the preaching of John. After all that he'd heard. He still hadn't changed his way. He didn't repent. Even after beheading God's servant.

He never changed his way. He never used any of the opportunities. That were given to him. And faced with the choice. He failed to stand up for John.

[38 : 23] In his hour of need. And yet in all his failures. His conscience. His conscience. Still bothered him.

His conscience. Still bothered him. Herod. He had repeatedly turned away from the truth. He had ignored the truth. He had denied the truth.

He'd even silenced the voice of truth. When he beheaded John the Baptist. But he hadn't silenced his conscience. He hadn't silenced his conscience.

Didn't matter how much he ran. Didn't matter how many times. He turned away from what he knew was right. Every time he did. His conscience.

Was still bothering him. Niggling at him. Bothering him all the time. And I wonder my friend. Does your conscience still bother you?

[39 : 26] Does your conscience still bother you? Does it remind you. Every time you're in church. That you're still without Christ. Does your conscience remind you.

That your opportunities are coming to an end. Every time you sit in a funeral. Does it alert you to the fact. That you're a lost sinner. In need of salvation.

Does your conscience. Speak to you. And haunt you. And condemn you. That you're still unconverted. Still lost.

Still graceless. Still godless. Still christless. I hope it does. I hope it does.

I hope your conscience still bothers you. I really do. I hope it still speaks to you. And reminds you that you need to turn to the Lord.

[40 : 26] Because there's one thing my friend. If you have silenced your conscience. To the things of God. Then God is no longer speaking to you.

And he has left you in your sin. Because that's what happened to Herod. He had had many opportunities.

And his conscience bothered him for a time. It bothered him to the point that he wanted to meet Jesus. And we read in Luke's gospel. That Herod was given the opportunity.

When Jesus was tried to be crucified. Jesus was sent to Herod. And Luke tells us. Herod was glad. Glad because he desired for a long time to see Jesus. He'd heard many things about him.

He'd hoped that Jesus would perform some sort of miracle. Before his eyes. But when Herod stood face to face with Jesus. And posed all his questions to him.

[41 : 31] Jesus said nothing. Jesus said nothing. Herod missed all his opportunities.

He had ignored his conscience. He had silenced God's spokesman. So when Herod stood before Jesus. Jesus remained silent.

And he said nothing. Nothing. And in that moment. Herod knew. He knew he had no more opportunities.

He knew he had wasted all his opportunities. Because Jesus didn't want to speak to him. Anymore. My friend.

Let me remind you today. Jesus is still speaking. And he is speaking to you today in the gospel.

[42 : 33] But whatever you do. Don't silence your conscience. Don't waste your opportunity. To come to Christ. Because you don't know.

If this is your last opportunity. You don't know if it's your last one. So you come. And you discover for yourself.

The great blessing it is. To follow Jesus Christ. And to live for him. And to serve him. As your saviour. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God. We give thanks to thee. The Lord one. Who graciously gives us opportunities.

And oh that we would take them. That we would see that they are presented to us. So clearly. That we would not waste them. That we would not waste.

[43 : 30] Our life chasing after the things of this world. But realize that thou art the one. Who promises us. Eternal life. Life that shall never end.

Lord bless us we pray. Bless thy word to us. O that it may be impressed upon our heart. That we would hear thy truth. From thee and from thee alone.

Guide us we pray throughout this day. And keep us and go before us. For Jesus sake. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 91.

Psalm 91. It's on page 352 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 91 from verse 14 to the end of the psalm.

Because on me he set his love. I'll save and set him free. Because my great name he hath known. I will set him on high. Down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 91 from verse 14 to 16.

[44 : 42] To God's praise. Because on me he set his love.

I'll save and set him free. Because my grace may be unruly.

I will set him set on high. He'll call on me.

I'll answer him. I will be with him still.

In trouble to deliver him. And honor him I will.

[45 : 54] With length of days unto his might. I will in satisfied.

I also my salvation.

Will cause his eyes to see. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen.