

Get Off The Fence, Repent!

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Date: 26 October 2025

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- [0 : 0 0] If you're using one of the pure Bibles, it's page 790. Heavenly Father, I thank you for your word.
- ! So please would you speak to us now as your word is open to us.
- Amen. Mark chapter 6, and I'm going to be reading from verse 7 down to verse 30. And so this is just after Jesus visited Nazareth, his hometown, and he was rejected there, but he continues going about the villages teaching with his apostles.
- Verse 7. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.
- He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.
- [1 : 2 2] And he said to them, whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.
- So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known.
- Some say, 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.
- But when Herod heard of it, he said, John, whom I have 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.
- But 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.
- [2 : 3 4] But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man. He kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed.
- And yet he heard him gladly. 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, his 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 she 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 and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter. And the king was exceedingly sorry.
- [3 : 3 5] But because of his oaths and his guests, he didn't want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner 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. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. Amen. Well, there are many lessons in any part of the Bible.

But our question that we should press into is what is the purpose of any given passage? What did the author, in this case Mark, want us to understand?

Because these authors aren't just writing historical accounts. In this passage, it seems like there's two very different stories. And we could explore the lessons in each.

[4 : 42] But why does Mark put these stories together? This is the first time the disciples, the twelve specifically, have been sent out to preach. And then also there's a very detailed account of Herod killing John the Baptist.

There's plenty of lessons about each of these things. But Mark has put them together. Creating a sandwich of the disciples going out. The Herod story.

And then the disciples coming back. And so what's the bigger point that Mark is making here? Before we get into all the details of the passage. Let me zoom out. And look at the whole thing.

And let me share a little modern parable. If you will. To illustrate the bigger point that Mark is making. So, there was a large group of people gathered together in a very large field.

On the one side of the group stood Jesus. On the other side of the group stood Satan. And now there was a fence at the edge of the field. And when Jesus had opened a gate.

[5 : 45] He called people to follow him out. Both Jesus and Satan began calling to people in the group. Jesus told them to turn from their sin.

And he would give them freedom and life. And Satan told them sin wouldn't harm them. They can do whatever they want. Jesus is lying. And the field would give them everything that they would want.

Some came out and went to Jesus. Others stayed in. Some going to Satan because they believed him. Some staying in because it was easier to stay where they were.

And some staying because that's what most people did. After a while. Most people had decided. However, there was a man who joined neither group.

Instead, he climbed onto the fence. That was there and he sat on it. Jesus and his people left and disappeared. And so too Satan and his people left and disappeared.

[6 : 43] And the man on the fence sat alone. And then Satan came back. Looking for something which he appeared to have lost. And the man said, have you lost something?

And Satan looked the man straight in the face and replied. No, come with me. And the man said, but I sat on the fence. I chose neither you nor him.

I chose to sit on the fence. And Satan said, that's okay. I own the fence. The moral of the story is. You cannot sit on the fence with repentance.

Jesus said in Matthew 12, 30. Whoever is not with me is against me. Whoever does not gather with me scatters. You see, the fence is not neutral.

And neither is the field. We're all in this field together, this world. But the world is not neutral. It's not like we live in this sterile, uninfluenced field with no plants or weeds.

[7 : 41] It's not like we make every decision with a blank slate. It's not like we ourselves are innocent and uninfluenced. And it's not like we get to make a fair decision without our will having already been influenced.

In many ways, we know this to be true. Whether it's nature versus nurture, we know that both genetics and upbringing play a significant role in the decisions that we make.

Even before considering that we might also have this element of sin in our nature. The world is not neutral.

And neither are we. Many people would never think that they are choosing Satan. But the reality is when you already live in his domain, you're already enslaved to sin.

And you're not as neutral or free as you think you are. If you're not with Jesus, you're working against him. Even if you think you're not. Because Jesus is the only solution to the sin problem.

[8 : 42] He's the only way. And therefore, if you're not with Jesus, who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, then you're not really repenting. And if you're not really repenting, then you're allowing sin to win.

As much as we would like to think that we are masters of our own destiny, we're not. Sin has already decided our destiny. The wages of sin is death.

And all have sinned, so all die. We are not masters of our own destiny. But the Son of God has come to offer us a different destiny.

He's the only one who can offer us a different destiny. Because he's the only one who never sinned. And he's the only one who has conquered sin. And he's the only one who made an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

You see, the wages of sin is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. And so we, we cannot determine our own destiny.

[9 : 46] And we are not neutral either. Our sin has already determined our destiny. So we can either have our sin and have its destiny.

Or we can have Jesus and have his destiny. There are only two rulers. You will either let sin rule over you or Jesus. If you're not surrendering to Jesus, you are by default surrendering to sin.

The world is not neutral. We are in a battle. And in this field, this world, we've already been invaded by sin. Our lives have already been invaded by sin.

And everyone feels this, whether they admit it or not. Even those who try to resist sin and evil. Even decent people who try to fight against our nature of sin.

We might not like it. But we cannot overcome it. Everyone in the world has this problem. Everyone in the world feels this problem.

[10 : 47] And even when we try to resist this problem, everyone in the world cannot overcome this problem. The only person is Jesus. And so, we cannot win against sin on our own.

The truth is, the only time that Satan had to recruit anyone was in the garden with Adam and Eve. By luring the first humans into sin, he captured the entire human race.

And now we are in a field full of weeds. And like the first humans did, our nature is now to disbelieve and disobey God. Taking whatever pleasures look good in our eyes.

Whether they kill us or not. And then we try to hide from the shame of it. And the consequence. We cannot win. And we will not win against sin on our own.

People might not think that they are against Jesus. Or with Satan. But you cannot sit on the fence. And think it will be okay in the end. Satan owns the fence.

[11 : 47] You are not going to fall into repentance over time. You are going to fall wherever your nature lies. Into sin and unrepentance. People like to think that sitting on the fence is actually not choosing.

But sitting on the fence is a choice itself. And in the end, it is a choice not to repent. And not to follow Jesus. The only person who can deal with their sin problem.

So that is the bigger picture in this part of Mark's Gospel. You can't sit on the fence with repentance. And with all that in mind.

It helps us understand the little details when we zoom in. And while it's true and applicable that preaching repentance can lead to persecution. The passage isn't really aimed at helping preachers be courageous.

Rather, it's aimed at helping people repent. One of the reasons why it's not aimed at trying to help us be courageous in preaching.

[12 : 47] But rather, it's trying to help us repent. Is because if you look at the first and last verse of our passage. If you look at verse 7 and verse 30. Mark begins to get specific with his language.

Verse 7, he talks about the 12. Specifically. In verse 30, he talks about the apostles. And so it's their word. Mark gets specific about who is sent out.

It's the 12 that are sent out. It's the apostles that are sent out. And so Mark's not using the generic term disciples. But talking about these people who were specifically handpicked.

By Jesus for this task. Back in chapter 3, Mark said that Jesus appointed 12 whom he named apostles. So that they might be with him.

And he might send them out to preach. And have authority to cast out demons. And so now we are seeing the 12 at work. When we're reading this, it's less about how disciples are received.

[13 : 46] And it's more about how the apostles of Jesus are received. How is their word received in the world? It will be their message and their witness specifically. That the whole world either receives or rejects.

Ever since Jesus chose and sent out these 12. The whole world has either had to accept their message or reject it. Now he sends them out in pairs.

He gives them authority over unclean spirits. He tells them to take hardly anything. And he tells them they will have to rely on those who receive them. If someone takes them in or to stay there the whole time.

They're not to try and look for better digs. If they're not received at a place at all. They're to shake the dust off their sandals and move on. A few reasons for this.

First, the lack of supplies means that people. If they say they accept the gospel. They will have to show it by their hospitality. Put your money where your mouth is.

[14 : 44] Unlike Herod. Who gladly listened to John. But he kept him in prison. If you really repent and accept God. You'll receive him into your home. God sent Jesus his son.

Jesus sent the apostles. Whoever received the apostles. Received the one who sent them. That's the logic. The whole deal. The whole deal is about repentance.

The apostles were calling people back to God. Through Jesus. Jesus. And whoever gave the apostles a bed and warmth and food and so on.

That was a good indicator whether they actually repented or not. If you repent then the proof will be in the pudding. Furthermore. They were sent not like an army.

Who invaded a country and fed off the land. Whether you liked it or not. They come humbly. Relying on God and the good graces of those who would receive them. Because God doesn't force people to repent.

[15 : 48] But he invites everyone everywhere to respond. And we see this. If you read the book of Acts. We see this. That converts often end up opening their homes and sharing food together.

High status people like Cornelius. The Roman centurion. Or Lydia. The wealthy businesswoman. Or the Roman jail guard in Philippi. They all take apostles into their homes.

And give them food and accommodation. And that shows the genuineness of their repentance. And so. The lack of supplies for the apostles. On this mission.

Seems to give them both an urgency. And authenticity for their mission. Either people will repent. And they'll take them in. And show that by feeding them.

Or they won't repent. And it will force the apostles. To move on quickly. So that they can get food and shelter. They're not going to hang around forever. To see if people repent or not.

[16 : 44] You either receive them or you don't. But you can't sit on the fence. That's the point. Another thing. Shaking the dust off the feet. This was a common thing for Jews.

If they were in Gentile. Non-Jewish country. When they left. They would shake the dust off their feet. To show that they're getting rid of the contamination. And any sense.

That these people don't worship. The true God. And yet. Jesus is using this as an indicator. That whoever you are. Whether you're Jewish or not. If you don't receive him.

You're turning your back on God. And so. He told the apostles. To do this. It was a simple way. To say that.

Repentance is not by. It's by repentance. That you enter the kingdom. Not by race. And so. Even if you were Jewish. You didn't have a birthright. To the kingdom of God.

[17 : 42] Entrance into the kingdom of God. Is by repentance. Not by race. Just as it is by grace. Through faith. And not by our own efforts. That you come to God. If you reject the Messiah.

God's son. Whether you're Jewish or not. Then you won't have a place in his kingdom. If you receive the Messiah. Whether you're Jewish or not. You will have a place in his kingdom.

And thirdly. Consider the authority that Jesus gave the apostles. And what they used it for. It was to get rid of demons that people had. And bring healing to people. And think about that.

Being contrasted with the authority that Herod had. And what did Herod use his authority for. Yet as we saw in Nazareth. At the start of the chapter.

Healing only came to those. Who came to Jesus. In Nazareth. He didn't heal many people. Because most people rejected him. And hardly anyone came to him for healing.

[18 : 41] And so. You can only have healing and wholeness in life. If you actually come to Jesus. If sin. Is killing us slowly. Which it is.

Then how can we hope for healing. And wholeness in life. If we want to continue. In our sinful lifestyles. People often see repentance. As something that puts a dampener on the party.

Yet sin blinds us. To see that the party is killing us. And such sinful living. Inevitably results. In a head. Being served on a platter. At these parties.

Sin is killing us slowly. Repentance is about life. And bringing us to God. And when you know God. Nothing is more amazing. And thrilling.

Than knowing the creator of all things. It's unbelievable. It's better than anything this world can offer. The Bible says that. No eye has seen. Nor ear heard.

[19 : 39] Nor mind imagined. What God has prepared. For those who love him. It's absolutely mind-blowing. And so. It is through the apostles being sent out.

That we ultimately hear about Jesus. Even here. Now. Two thousand years later. In this place. It's through the apostles. That we hear about Jesus. And if we come to God.

We will know things that are far better. And more satisfying. And life-giving. Than this world. Could ever offer. Now. We could have just focused on. Jesus sending out the twelve.

But again. It's good to see. Why Mark. Connects that. With the story about Herod. What is Mark doing. By putting these stories together. And so. I want to dig into.

Just a few ways. That they connect. And then I'll share. Some concluding thoughts. How do the stories connect? Why does Mark. Give. An unusual amount of detail.

[20 : 37] About Herod. He gives us more insight. About Herod. Than almost anyone else. In Mark's gospel. Beside Jesus. Why does he give us. Such insight. Into Herod. And why do that.

At this point. Of the story. Well. First. The most obvious connection. Is verse 14. If you look at verse 14. It says. King Herod.

Heard of it. For Jesus name. Had become known. And so. The apostles. Are sent out. To preach. And suddenly. Herod. Hears about it. Because Jesus name.

Becomes known. And so. That's. The most obvious. Connection. To these stories. If we dig a little deeper. In verse 14. And 15. The apostles. Have spread the gospel. And suddenly.

People have all sorts of. Opinions. About who Jesus is. And so. Look at verse 14. And 15. Some said. That. John the Baptist. Had been raised from the dead. And that's why.

[21 : 31] There's all these miracles. Happening. With Jesus. Others said. That he's Elijah. And others said. That he's a prophet. Like one of the prophets. Of old. And so.

The. The preachers go out. And opinions. Start to arise. And we see more clearly. You'll probably. If you know Mark's gospel. You'll remember. In Mark chapter 8.

When Jesus asked the disciples. Who do people say that I am? It's the exact same. Three opinions. That are listed. And then. Jesus will ask them. Well. Who do you say that I am?

And so. Who people say that he is? John the Baptist. Raised from the dead. Elijah. Or one of the prophets. And we'll see those opinions again.

In Mark chapter 8. But then he will turn to his disciples. And say. Who do you say that I am? And Peter says. That Jesus is the Christ. And you'll remember. That right at the start.

[22 : 26] Of Mark's gospel. That's Mark's opening statement. That this is the good news. About Jesus the Christ. The son of God. And yet it takes so long. All these opinions.

About who Jesus is. Until someone finally realizes. That he is the Christ. At this point in our story. Nobody is understanding. Who Jesus is.

All these opinions. But nobody's getting it right. The only ones. That have got it right. So far. Really have been the demons. That are crying out. Another connection.

Is verse 16. And verse 29. When Herod executed John. John's disciples heard about it. And took his body. And then now. There are these disciples.

Going about. Preaching the same message. That John preached. About repentance. Albeit it's different disciples. And they're doing miracles. In Jesus name. And Herod hears about it.

[23 : 22] And seems to think. That John has been raised from the dead. Perhaps Herod thinks. That these disciples. That are preaching. The apostles. Maybe he thinks. They're the same ones. That came and got John's body.

Again. The issue seems to be. Who is Jesus. And how do you respond to that. Herod doesn't see. Who Jesus is.

And nor does he seem. Any more willing to repent. If John was raised from the dead. He doesn't seem. Any more willing to repent. Another connection point.

Is that when. Jesus was rejected. In Nazareth. At the start of the chapter. Jesus referred to himself. As a prophet. A prophet is not without honor.

Except in his hometown. And so Jesus. Refers to himself. For the first time. As a prophet. And then we have this story. About another holy. And righteous prophet.

[24 : 16] When he preaches repentance. He's beheaded. Back in chapter one. Mark already put these things together. John is the prophet.

Who preaches repentance. And prepares the way for Jesus. And then in chapter one. Verse 14. Mark says. John's arrested. And Jesus. Goes out preaching.

About repentance. And now in chapter six. Jesus is rejected. And John is beheaded. If that's what happened to John. The one who prepares.

The way. What's going to happen to Jesus. And what's going to happen to those. Who Jesus sends out. Finally. There's a thematic connection. And this is more of a whole.

Bible picture. But the growing picture of John. The Baptist. Being. An Elijah like figure. Who comes before the Lord. Comes.

[25 : 12] And chapter one. Mark already make it. Made a connection. Between John the Baptist. And Elijah. Elijah. As Malachi. Spoke about him. Who prepares the way. For the Lord coming.

And if the people. Don't listen to him. It will be trouble. For the whole nation. That's what Malachi says. Before there's this silence. For 400 years. And then John the Baptist. Comes. Malachi said.

That Elijah. Will go. Before. And prepare the way. And then the next person. That turns up. 400 years later. Is John the Baptist. And so there's this thematic link.

Now in chapter six. We have this account. That actually looks. Very similar. To the prophet Elijah. The sinful king Ahab.

And his very evil wife. Jezebel. It's a very similar story. Where. The prophet speaks to the king. And calls out his sin. The king is perplexed.

[26 : 09] And somehow. Has this weird relationship. Where he hears him. And yet the wife of the king. Wants to kill the prophet. The same thing happened. With Ahab.

Jezebel. And Elijah. The same thing happens. With Herod. Herodias. And John. And this shows. How John is like Elijah. And what happened to John.

Gives us an indication. Of what's going to. Happen to the nation. And Jesus. Makes this connection. In chapter 8. Which we'll get to. Another time. So we have.

Herod hearing about Jesus. We've got all these. Various opinions. Of who Jesus is. Herod thinks. That Jesus. Is John. Raised from the dead. But are any of the people.

Any closer. To repenting. That's the question. And as much as. Herod. Felt guilty. And sorry.

[27 : 06] That John. Was killed. He doesn't seem. Any closer. To repentance. And that's the thing. That we need to realize. Is that sitting on the fence. Doesn't mean that.

Oh well. I didn't. I didn't do it this time. But another opportunity. Arise. Every time. We resist. Repentance. Our heart. Gets a little bit. Harder. It's going to be more likely. That we continue to resist.

Than it is. That we're going to be. Suddenly open to it. And we see that. With Herod. Jesus has been. To his own hometown. And despite the people. Witnessing divine wisdom. And mighty works.

They talk themselves. Into rejecting Jesus. Because they can't accept. That he's anything more. Than a carpenter. And so. Think about that story.

Jesus goes to his hometown. He does. Mighty works. And speaks. With divine wisdom. The people can't get over. The fact. That this is the carpenter.

[28 : 02] That they knew. Growing up. And they end up. Rejecting him. It was a prejudice. That led to rejection. And so.

Mark has already shown us. That prejudice. Can lead to rejection. And now. In this account. With Herod. We see. That moral weakness. Can also lead.

To rejection. Neither prejudice. Nor moral weakness. Will help you repent. We were looking at this account.

On Wednesday. Wednesday night. At our Bible study. And we were thinking about. The foolish vow. That Herod made. And we were considering.

That God takes vows seriously. But. What do you do? What could Herod do? We thought about. The book of Judges. Jephthah made a. A foolish vow as well.

[28 : 55] And ended up. Killing his own daughter. And we spoke about this. Cameron. Very. Helpfully. Pointed out. A really good point. And. With Jephthah.

Making a vow. And he offers his daughter. As a. A sacrifice. Did God not say. That you weren't supposed. To do that. So even though he takes vows seriously.

God also takes. Life seriously. And if you're picking between. The two. Do you think God would want you. To keep your vow. And kill a life. Of course not.

What about Herod? He should have went back. He should have said. Well I could give you half my kingdom. But. We didn't talk about. Beheading someone. But he didn't have the backbone.

He didn't repent. He didn't want to lose face. In front of these nobles. And his friends. He didn't want to disappoint. His evil wife. And so.

[29 : 54] God actually made a way. To get out of a vow. I don't know if you know this. God made a way. To get out of a. Sacred vow. And it's in Leviticus 5. Verses 4 to 6. And it says this.

And this is in the law. That if you take. A thoughtless vow. If anyone thoughtlessly. Makes an oath. To do anything. Whether good. Or evil.

When they become aware of it. And realize their guilt. They should confess their sin. And offer the appropriate sacrifices. For atonement. And not do the vow.

And so God made a way. To get out of the vow. Yet it involved repenting. And Herod. Did not want to repent. Because he was sitting. On the fence. He didn't need to keep.

His foolish vow. His lack of repentance. Before this moment. His repentance. Before this moment. Only pushed him. Towards. Total rejection.

[30 : 50] In the end. You see. It often happens. In little things. Way before. We think. We've got the real challenge. Little moments. Of rejection. That harden our hearts.

You can't sit on the fence. Time is just. Too short. In this life. And your soul. Is just too important. To sit on the fence. In your flesh.

Our flesh. Will never. Help us. Repent. If we sit on the. On the fence. Long enough. Our own flesh. Will convince us. To reject Jesus.

You see. Our flesh. Does not care about heaven. Do you know why? Because our flesh. Is not going. So it doesn't care. Our flesh. Is going to. Continue. To convince us.

To get as much. As we can. Out of this world. Because. After this world. Our flesh. Is going to be nowhere. In the grave. Your flesh. Doesn't care about heaven. Why should we.

- [31 : 45] Expect. Our earthly desires. To help us. Think about. Anything. Beyond. This life. In this world. Our earthly desires. Will never help us. Think about. Beyond this world.
- Paul says this. In Galatians 5. He says. The desires. Of the flesh. Are against. The spirit. And the spirit. Is against the flesh.
- And they're opposed. To each other. To keep each other. From doing the things. That they want. What does the flesh want? It wants as much sin. And enjoyment. And pleasure. As it can get.
- And what does the spirit want? It wants the will of God. It wants life. It wants you. To lead you. To Jesus. And so. They're fighting each other. The flesh.
- The flesh. Wants to keep you. From doing. What your soul. Wants. And the spirit. Wants to keep you. From doing. What your flesh. Wants. Our flesh. Is not going to help us. And if we wait about.
- [32 : 41] In the fence. Thinking our flesh. Is going to help us. Our flesh. Is going to turn. Its back on us. And our own conscience. Is going to condemn us. Finally.
- Repentance. Isn't just a one-time event. It's not just about. Converting to some. Different belief. Some people talk about. Becoming a Christian. At some point. And yet still living.
- In unrepentance. But that isn't how it's supposed to be. Following Jesus. Is not supposed to look. Like unrepentance. A life of sin. Even Paul. Found the same problem though.
- In places like Corinth. Plenty of people. Who made a decision. To believe in Jesus. Yet still lived. In all kinds of sin. And Paul told them. In many ways. How inconsistent.
- That was. With what it meant. To follow Jesus. Repentance. Repentance. Is turning away from sin. And turning toward God. Which we have to do.
- [33 : 36] Every single day. Not that we become a Christian. Every single day. But it's about. Constantly orienting. Our lives. Away from sin. And toward God. And we know.
- That it will be a constant fight. Against our flesh. Have you ever driven a car. That always pulls to the left. If you want a shot of our car. After the service. You'll see. It tends to pull to the left.
- Our flesh pulls us. Towards sin. And so it's a constant battle. To reorient. Ourselves. Away from sin. Toward God. So the question is.
- Are we repenting today? Forget about yesterday. And don't worry about tomorrow. Are we repenting today? There was a.
- There was a natural. There was a local disaster. In Jesus time. Where a tower collapsed. And it killed loads of people. And some of the Jews. Asked Jesus about this. And they asked Jesus.
- [34 : 34] Was that God's punishment? On their lives. And Jesus said. Why don't you stop worrying about them. And start thinking about. Where you're at.
- Are you prepared. To meet God. And so we have a tendency. To think about the other person. We have a tendency. To think about tomorrow. Or yesterday. But what about today?
- Are we repenting today? Does it look like. Our life is oriented. Away from sin. And toward God. We cannot claim. To have Jesus.
- And yet not be repenting. Not that we'll never fail. We will fail. We will make mistakes. But generally speaking. If you are repenting. Then you're constantly repenting.
- You're constantly orienting. Your life away from sin. And toward God. And it's not about. How much you love religion. It's not about how much you love.

[35 : 30] Going to church. It's not about. How much you love charity. It's not about. How much you love singing hymns. It's not about. How much you love Israel. It's not about. How much you love.

Good morals. it's not about how much you love listening to your favorite preacher like Herod. It will be seen in how much you hate sin and how much you love Jesus.

How much do you begin to hate sin and love Jesus? Did you know that Herod Antipas, that's the Herod in our passages, Herod Antipas, he wasn't actually given the title of king.

It's an odd thing that Mark uses the word king in here. Perhaps he uses it ironically, but Herod Antipas wasn't given the title king, unlike his wife's brother Agrippa I was given the title king.

And Herodias convinced Herod to petition to the emperor for the title king. And in so doing, both Herod and Herodias ended up being exiled.

[36 : 39] You see the contrast between two kings? On the one side we've got Herod, the would-be king, who might listen to your preaching. He might keep you safe in prison, but in the end his moral weakness will behead you for the sake of a foolish vow at a drunken party.

And then on the other side is the true king, Jesus, who will call you to repent. He's not afraid to offend you if it means saving your soul, because sin is killing you, but yet he will lay his own life down for you.

Which king is better? There's many things that we could explore in this passage. Don't make foolish vows at a drunken party. Watch out who you marry.

But really this is all about repentance. Repenting is both seeing sin for how ugly and destructive it really is, and seeing Jesus for who he really is, for how glorious he is as God's son, for how able he is as our saviour, for how willing he is to lay down his life for us, and for how good he is as the eternal king of a kingdom that is coming and will last forever.

Let me pray. God, we thank you for your word to us. We pray that your spirit would teach us from you, that we would sense your presence, and that you would help us to see Jesus for who he really is, that you would help us to see sin for what it really is.

[38 : 26] Even if we have, we are so easily bewitched and fooled, but it is killing us, and Jesus allowed sin to kill him, that he might save us.

And so help us to see and follow Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen. Amen.