

Herod Looks Back - Compromise, Content & Conclusion

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 December 2024

Preacher: Mr Tam MacLennan

- [0 : 00] Let me give you a very warm welcome to a service of worship this morning. That's how she brought the pretty items, just as you have them on the bulletin.
- John writes, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power. For Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.
- Let us worship God. Let us sing this praise from Psalm number 93. Psalm number 93, and we shall sing the whole psalm.
- Psalm 93, this psalm is a triumphal celebration of the Lord who sovereignly governs, and of the cash that has redeemed us because of his work. And so it begins, The Lord doth reign, and clothe the sea with majesty most bright.
- His works be shown clothe to thee and gird of eye to the mount. The world is also established as it cannot depart. Thy throne is fixed to hold, and thou, from everlasting art, his kingdom has no end.
- [1 : 11] But then Psalm starts to speak about the enemies of God and the enemies of the church in verse 3. The floods, O Lord, have lifted up. They lifted up their voice. The floods have lifted up their waves and made a mighty noise.
- But it goes on to say that whoever mighty the enemy might be, that the Lord is even mightier. But yet, the Lord that is on high is more of might by far than the noise of many waters is, or great sea billows are.
- And so it concludes by testimony to the faithfulness of God's word, and of the felicity that God's people shall enjoy in God's house. Thy testimonies, everyone in faithfulness excel, and holiness for them are, Lord, that the house is becoming well.
- Let us then send these verses of Psalm 93, the whole psalm, to God's praise. The Lord gathering on the cross is thee, when majesty most bright, His life's beautiful and close to be a spirit of a great night.
- The world is also delicious, that it shall not depart.
- [2 : 54] Thy **est** it, The full thunder from everlasting light.
- The flood, O Lord, thou lifted up. They lifted up their eyes.
- The flood, thou lifted up their wings. I hear the mighty noise.
- But yet the Lord lies on high. Is what of my night's heart.
- The noise of many waters. The mighty arrows.
- [4 : 14] The mighty arrows. Thy casting on is every one, in this world's death hell.
- And through it yes, never more, thy thy **iga** dwell.
- Let it stand, it is the **iga**. Almighty and most gracious God, thou art the one in whom we live and move and have our being.

Thou art the one who, indeed, as we have just been saying, are the one who is reigning, the one who is clothed in majesty most bright. Thou art the one who alone hath immortality, who dwelleth in might unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom is all glory and all power everlasting.

So as we draw near to thee, great God, we pray that thou hast drawn near to us, that we might come to know of thy presence here with us this day.

[5 : 53] The Lord, may we come, first of all, to give. To give thee the praise and to give thee the worship, for thou art worthy. Thou art worthy of our worship.

Thou art worthy of our time. Thou art worthy of our praise. Thou art worthy of our praise. So help us then to come before thee as humble and weak servants of the Lord.

And help us, O Lord, as we come before thee. That we might do so with the awe of the knowledge of whom it is we come before. That thou art a God who has created all that there is.

That thou art a God which dwelleth on high. That there is no God like unto thee. Or for who is a God like unto thee which pardoneth iniquity.

So, O great God, as we seek to come before thee. And as we seek, O Lord, to bring thee the praise that is due to thy name. We pray that thou would help us. That thou would help us as we seek to come before thee.

[6 : 56] That thou would give us a heart filled with the spirit of grace and of truth. So that we might come and worship thee acceptably. O Lord, may our worship this day be acceptable and nice time.

We pray, O Lord, that as we say in thy praises. And as we hear of thy word. And as thy word is preached, O Lord. That we might receive it and believe it. Or that we might look upon the promises of Christ.

And receive them for they are all yea and deny in Christ. O great God, we pray then. That thou would help us in our worship. To have the right hearts.

To have hearts directed unto thee. Looking unto thee. Looking unto Jesus. Who is the author and the nature of thy will be paid. O Lord, O God.

We pray for this congregation of thy people. We give thee thanks for them. And for the work which occurred in this community. We pray for them, O Lord. Lord, I say, like many lands in our, like many culprits in our lands now, are now being.

[7 : 58] We pray, O Lord. We pray, O Lord, that thou would come near to them in this time. And that thou would be faithful in fulfilling this culprits every week.

O Lord, O Lord, that thou would be faithful in this place. O Lord, that thou would be faithful in this place. That thou would be faithful in this congregation. And yea, indeed, in this community.

We give thanks for the community. And we pray for it, O Lord. Remember all those who are in. Remember those who do not even darken the doors of the church.

Remember those who have the lights on in their homes. But who have no lights on in their hearts. O Lord, O Lord, we pray for them. We pray for those who are still strangers to grace and to God. And we pray, grace God, that thou would be pleased.

To open up their eyes. To remove the scales from their eyes. So that they might see, not only this soon. But all the more, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is clothed in majesty, most bright. O that they might see their need of this area.

[8 : 58] And that they might see that the saviour bids them to come. O great God, we pray for our communities. We pray for those who are strangers to thee. Those in our families.

Those in our friends. Connected to us by blood, but not by spirit, O Lord. We pray that we all might be connected, O Lord. Under one name, under one banner.

Under the Lord Jesus Christ. So Lord, we pray that as this congregation and many in our land is vacant.

We pray for labourers of the gospel. We pray for those who will come to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. We pray for those who will seek to preach in and out of season.

O that thou would raise up men who have been called to this calling. So that they might seek to preach. Not what will please me. O that thou would raise up men who have been called to this calling.

[9 : 55] O great God. Remember not only the needs of our islands, but the needs of our nation. And we confess, O Lord, how we as a nation have turned our backs from thee.

We have sought our own pleasure, our own will, and our own gain. O Lord God. O Lord God. O Lord God. Thou hast given us leverage which we deserve.

Lord, for thou hast poured out thy judgment upon us. For we have failed to do what we ought to do. Lord, thou hast set idolaters over us.

As thy church have been quiet. We have seen bills cast which are contrary to thy law. And we have done nothing. O Lord, we pray that thou would look down upon us in mercy.

That thou would give the church of God grace. So that we might stand and contend for the truth. And O Lord, that we might even in this say, O be on the knees more often.

[11 : 01] So that we might petition thee. So that we might come before thee. Asking that thou would be down upon us in mercy. In wrath thou would remember mercy, O Lord. Turn us again, Lord God of hosts.

Upon us thou hast. To make thy countenance to shine. So we shall be safe. Lord, O God, be pleased to turn us again unto thee.

The church of God that we might turn to thee. And that in doing so, that thou would be pleased to quicken the hearts of those around us. To quicken the hearts of our island.

To quicken the hearts of our nation. So that we might be once again known as the people of the book. Lord, O God, may thy word be in our own hearts.

May we, like the psalmist, seek to hide thy law in our hearts to keep us from offending thee. O we bless thee that thou hast given us thy word. We bless thee that thou hast shown us the way of salvation.

[11 : 59] And we pray, O Lord, that thou would magnify Christ in our midst here this morning. That one writer of old said, that for every look we have to ourselves, that for every look we have to ourselves, that we would look ten times the more to Christ.

O for we know that for bad we may be this morning, for ever sinful we may be, that there is one who died for sinners. That there is one who came flesh of our flesh.

And who died for us. All that we might be saved. That our sins might be forgiven. And who rose for our justification so that we can be raised again.

Born again. In new life. O Lord, O God, we pray then that as we come before thee this day that it would be Christ that is out of meditation. That it would be Christ who is exalted in our midst.

And so we pray, O Lord, that Christ would be our focus. O Lord, we come before thee for we have many needs.

[13 : 08] Many needs as individuals. Many needs as congregations. As an island, as a nation. Or whether they are physical, mental, or spiritual.

Thy needs so long. And we come before thee asking for thy help. Asking that thou would be with us. That thou would comfort us. That it would give us the grace to seek to be able to bear each other's burdens.

To seek to be able to comfort one another with the comfort whereof we have been comforted. O Lord, our God, help us with grace. Remember not only the islands of the nation.

But remember the nations of the world, O Lord. Particularly the persecuted church. All we bring them before thee, O Lord. Whether in the various parts of the world that they have found.

Whether it's the underground church in China. Or in the church in Iran. Or Pakistan. Or Pakistan. Or where Christianity is outlawed. But they still have the strength.

[14 : 09] And they still have the courage to profess the Lord Jesus Christ. We are often ashamed at their boldness. But the Lord, we ask that thou would give them strength.

That thou would uphold them. That thou would continue to grant them the courage. So that they might continue to confess the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Lord, we pray for those who who govern over us.

Those whom thou hast given to us. So we pray that thou would turn their hearts to thee. We pray that they might come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

So that they might seek to rule our nation and our kingdom according to the word which thou hast given. But how we may glorify and enjoy thee.

So then we pray, O Lord, that thou would be with us for the rest of our morning. And that as we seek to join together in worship that we might know that we are not doing this alone for many churches and saints have already begun.

[15 : 16] And many will continue to do so later on. So we pray that we might do so with grace and joy in our hearts that we might bring thee the praise that is due to thy name.

And that thou, O Lord, be the one who sanctifies us for they will be sanctified. That will be sanctified in them that draw now. So bless us then, we do ask.

Watch over us, we pray. Guard us, keep us and accept us for we ask it in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. Well let us read the word of God first of all as we find it in the book of Esther.

The book of Esther is just after the book of Nehemiah and it's just before the book of Job. So we find the book of Psalms, go back one to the book of Job and then go back another one to the book of Esther.

And we'll read first of all in Esther chapter 7, the short chapter just the whole chapter. The book of Esther chapter 7.

[16 : 35] Hear now the word of God. So they came and Hanun came to banquet with Esther the queen and the king said unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, Queen Esther?

And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request and it shall be performed even to the half of the kingdom? Then Queen Esther answered and said, If I find favour in thy title and it is pleased the king, let my life be given me at thy petition and my people at my request.

For we are sold by my people to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish. But if we have been sold for bond men and bond women, I have held my tongue. Although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

Then the king has read its answer and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he? And where is he? What does presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary of the enemy is this wicked canon.

Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden. And Haman stood up to make requests for his life to Esther the queen.

- [17 : 51] For his life, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then he came returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine. And Haman was fallen on the bed whereon Esther was.

Then said the king, Would he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Tarbona, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows, fifty cubits, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for a word of high.

He had spoken good for the king, standing in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him, they know. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that they had prepared for more to time.

Then was the king's wrath pacified. Amen. This is God's word to Esther. You will bless it to us. Let us sing again. Let's hang on Psalm number 26.

Psalm 36. And we shall sing verses 4-8. In this psalm, David appeals to God to vindicate him concerning his integrity.

- [19 : 06] For he walks not in the way of the wicked, but he walks in the way of the righteous. Psalm number 26, verse 4. With persons vain I have not sat, nor would the sinner storm.

The assembly of the men I hate, to sin with such I shone. My hands in innocence, O Lord, I'll wash and purify. So to thy holy altar go and compass it for I, that I, with voice of thanks to me, publish and declare, and tell of all thy mighty works that great and wondrous are.

The habitation of thy house, Lord, I have loved well. Yea, in that place I do delight, where doth thy honor dwell. Let us ever sing these verses of Psalm 26, verses 4 to 8, to God's face.

with persons with The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

- [20 : 59] The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy. The assembly of this man I hate to say with a joy.

Gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 6. Mark, chapter 6, we shall read from verse 14 to verse 29. Mark, chapter 6, verse 14. Here again, the word of God.

- [22 : 47] And King Herod heard of him, for his name was Stregobron, and he said that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore a mighty works who showed forth themselves in him.

Others said that it is Elias, and others said that it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound with prison for Herodias to say, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her.

For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him, but she could not.

For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and unholy, and observed him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod, on his birthday, made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chiefestates of Galilee. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and the king sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

[24 : 04] And he swore unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of thee, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and it said unto her mother, What shall I ask?

And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will, that thou give me by and by in a charge of the head of John the Baptist.

And the king was exceeding sorry. Yet for his oath's sake, and for those sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in the prison. And brought his head in a tower, and gave it to the damsel.

And the damsel gave it to her mother. And when the disciples heard of it, they came, and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb. This is the word of God.

[25 : 08] We trust that the Lord have blessed his word to us. But before we consider the passage, let us sing again. This time it's Psalm 37. Psalm 37.

And we shall sing four stanzas from verse 12 to 16. This stanza has a lot of comparison between the righteous and between the wicked.

And the verses that we'll be singing refers to the wicked and their character and their destruction. Verse 12. The wicked plots against the just, and at him wecks his teeth.

The Lord shall laugh at them, because his day he come and see it. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and bent their bow to slay the poor and needy, and to kill men of an upright way.

With their own sword, which they have drawn, shall enter their own heart. Their bows, which they have bent, shall break, and into pieces part.

[26 : 12] A little as a just man has, is more and better found than is the wealth of many such as lewd and wicked are.

Solemn words indeed. But let us sing these verses of Psalm 37, verses 12 to 16. To God's praise. The wicked close against the just, and at him wecks his teeth.

The wicked close against the just, and at him wecks his teeth.

And then they're both to slay. The wicked close against the just, and at him wecks his teeth.

The wicked close against the just, and at him wecks his teeth.

[28 : 20] And at him wecks his teeth. I live just like God's just mind This world I've been to cry And this world I've been to cry As you've done with it Well, seeking the Lord's help, let us turn back to the passage of Shepard We read in the Gospel according to St. Mark 6 And for our text again let us read verse 20 Mark 6, verse 20

For heaven feared John, knowing that he was a just man and unholy And observed him And that when he heard him, he did many things And heard him glad Today is the last Sabbath of this year The last Sunday of 2024 In a few days if the Lord preserves us Then we shall enter into another year Which will mark another beginning I want us to look back on this past year How is it that you would describe it?

Or how is it that you would remember it? Would it be one of those years that you look back with in fondness? Maybe looking at the great memories The great successes that life has to bring Or would it perhaps be a year to forget?

A year to forget? A year filled with regret? Sadness to you The doctor will be the case And people's lives As they look back on their lives They may see not only the good things But even more the bad things That have happened I heard a story of a man Who bought a brand new car And as he was showing his car to his folk Somebody scratched the car And before he looked As he looked upon the car He saw a brand new car And the scratch was only a wee A wee, a wee, a wee thing But now when he looked upon the car It was no longer a brand new car he saw He saw a scratched car And so often that's the case With our own lives As we look back As we look back Probably We probably had more good days Than bad days It's the bad days That we remember And maybe as you look back On your own life

You consider what you did But also what you didn't do What you failed to do In football Goalkeepers are Particularly remembered Not necessarily for their great saves But really for their great blunders I wonder if you've made a decision In your lifetime That you possibly look back on With regret And perhaps still playing At the back of your mind Well, Herod In our passage Made a decision That didn't leave his mind He beheaded John the Baptist And the reason we know Why he didn't leave his mind Is because of what we read In verse 14 And also verse 16 When he heard of this man It was Jesus Who had become well known In his day He had to say In verse 14 That John is risen From the dead In verse 15 We find out Maybe other suggestions As to who it may be But verse 16 King Herod is convinced

[32 : 21] He said It is John Whom I beheaded He is risen From the dead Now there were a few theories As to who This man Jesus May be Some said it was Our prophets Like the prophets In the Old Testament Some said it was The prophet As in the Messiah That was prophesied to come Some said it was Elias Or Elijah But some others Say that it was John the Baptist Risen from the dead And as I had heard People suggesting That it could be John the Baptist Risen from the dead When he heard of this man Who was performing miracles And also preached Of a man who preached That men should repent Immediately His mind was drawn back To the one Who preached the baptism For repentance And remission Of sins That's the beginning Of the Gospel According to St. Mark Tells us

He remembers John As he considers Which theory Perhaps may be True of this man Jesus His conscience Reminds him Of what he's done He remembers The evil That he did It's still in the back Of his mind And in fact He condemns Himself It is John Who I Beheaded He knows This evil Is his Doing I Beheaded Him Now we know Ourselves Don't we That we've sinned We know enough About ourselves To condemn Ourselves Let alone Our sins Of ignorance The sins that we know About ourselves Condemn us No matter how good You may think That you are You know you're not perfect You know you've said You've done bad things You've had bad thoughts You've said bad things You know you're not perfect You know enough To condemn yourself And Herod knew this also

He hears of Jesus Working And his mind Is brought back To John the Baptist His mind is brought back To the one Whom he Beheaded And the writer Goes on to then Explain how It was That Herod Ended up Beheading John And there was Herod had a brother Called Philip Who had married The son Called Therodius And other sources Tell us that Herod himself Would have been Married At this point Or before He had married Therodius And Josephus He was an early Jewish writer He tells us that Herod when he was Visiting his brother Philip He caught eyes With Adonius And she with him And so the two Illicit lovers Agreed to separate From their present Partners And to marry Each other And Luke The gospel And Luke tells us that At the time of Herod being Tegrath over Galilee And his brother Philip being Tegrath over

Aetoria That this time Was the time When John Began his public Ministry And as it was John was a preacher Of righteousness John preached The whole world And in doing so John rebuked Sin His preaching Was black And white He said As it was He didn't Water Down Anything This I'm sure Would have been Unusual For Herod to hear Because Herod Would have Surrounded himself Of those Who were simply To flatter him They might Think that His adulterous In sensuous Relationship With Herodius Was bad But they would Never dare Say it To his face They all wanted To remain Close to him And so they Affirmed him In his sin Don't we see Much of that In our own day The people In the high places

Praising Sinful Lifesand Not wanting To say Anything That Has the Potential To offend People Not wanting To say Anything That's Politically Incorrect In our Own Day And age Unfortunately We even Hear of Ministers If we can Call them That Who won't Even mention Sin In their Pulpits In case They offend Those In the People John So To please Not those Around him But the Almighty God And don't We need More of that Today Don't we need Those Who will not Be laxed Concerning The law Of God But those Who will Stand up And contend For it Those who Are afraid To speak The parts Of the Bible Which are Politically Incorrect In our Own Day And age So to Preach In And Out Of season Well because John was a Preacher of Truth He told

[37 : 24] Herod that It is not Lawful for Him to Have His Brothers Wife He stood Up for The Truth Even for Herod the Techerah Who had The civil Authority To kill Him But it Was that John feared The king Of Kids More Than King Herod But it Was so That His Preaching Led To Opposition Which will Always be The case When the Word of God is Faithfully Proclaimed Herodius Wanted John To be Killed Because Of His Teaching She Didn't Like What He Had To Say Where's All The Positivity Where's All The Love Might It's True For You But It's Not True For Me She Wanted John Dead Herod Didn't Want To Go Against Her Wishes But There Was Another Problem Because Herod Also Feared The Multitude And The Multitude

Counted John As A Prophet Therefore Killing John Could Result In Herod Having His Reputation Ruined And So As we Unfold The Passage Tells Us I Want Us To Consider The Appoint That We Have Before Us Under Three Different Headings Compromise Content And Conclusion Compromise Content And Conclusion Firstly Herod Decides To Compromise Verse 17 For Herod Himself Had Sent For And Laid Hold Upon John And Bound To Prison For Herod His estate His Brother Philip's Wife For He Had Married Herod Herod He Said It Is Not Lawful For The To Have Herod Life But He Also He He He Said To Him That John Should Be Killed And So He Decided To Compromise To Please Everyone He Didn't Want to Kill John The Baptist

Because He He He He He He He He! He He! He woman of compromise. You hear God's word preached to you, yet you don't seek to do what it seems.

You start to make excuses. You hear the Ten Commandments set before you, showing you God's way, but you turn away from them, seeking your own way. When the word of God says, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man is God, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and so I have God, that he will abundantly pardon. You say, not yet.

Maybe when I'm older. Maybe once I'm more mature. Maybe once I've had my fun. Maybe once I'm better. Maybe when this. Maybe when that. Maybe when whenever. Just not now. Not now. I could lose my friends. I could lose my family. They might think this of me. They might think that of me. I'll go to church, yes, but I'm not taking time to be my Lord and Saviour right now. Compromise.

[41 : 13] You may even compromise how you view the law of God. Yes, I'll be the Sabbath. I'll go to church Sunday. Then when you go home with carnal thoughts, carnal words, carnal actions. No spiritual meditation whatsoever. You might say, yes, I've never committed adultery. I've remained with my spouse my whole life faithfully. Then you've lusted after somebody else. You've said unchaste words. We're all prone to compromise. Especially with God's law.

But David wanted to please everyone. He prioritised friendship more than truth. He was more concerned about peace in his surroundings as opposed to peace in his own soul.

Friends, what is your concern this day? As we come to the close of another year, what is it that you value? What is it that you prioritise? What is it that you love? How do you seek to be satisfied? What is it that you take delight in? Can you say with the psalmist, teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thine precepts divine. And to observe it to the end, I shall my heart incline. Are you willing to please the Lord, or are you willing to please people?

The apostle Paul writes, for do I now persuade men, O God, or do I seek to please men? That if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ. If you are willing to please men, then you cannot be the servant of Christ. If you are willing to please men, then you cannot be satisfied by God. This people pleasing, this compromise will blind you to the truth.

You will want to be satisfied your own way, and not the way of God. There is only one way in which our souls can be eternally satisfied. One way we can have peace with God. That way is not the way of compromise, but by hearing the truth and acting upon it according to the truth. That way is following the way, the truth, and the life. That way is in that name that is above every other name, the Lord Jesus, who came down to this world that you might believe on him and be saved. I will let you remember the story of Naaman in the Bible. Naaman was the commander of the king of Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a legend. He had this condition that made him unclean. But he heard that the prophet Elisha, who was in Israel, could heal him. And so he decides to go to the prophet Elisha's house, to be healed. And we read there that Elisha sent a messenger to him, telling him to go wash in the Jordan seven times, and he would be clean. So he's enough. But what is it that happens? Naaman starts to get angry. We read there,

[44 : 35] Naaman, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the letter. Are not Abana and Farpar, rivers of Damascus, bending in all the waters of Israel? May I not watch him then and between? So he turned and went away in a rage. Naaman didn't like the way the messenger of God told him how he could be made clean. He had his own idea on how he could be clean in the rivers of Damascus, as opposed to the rivers of Jordan.

But the truth of the matter was that if he wanted to be healed, that there was only one way in which this could happen. That he would have to go to the river Jordan, not to himself in it six times, but he would have to do himself seven times in the river Jordan too, so that he would be clean.

Cleaned. Now eventually Naaman did that, and sure enough, he was cleansed. But the thing, what are you doing when you hear the word of God that speaks to you faithfully every week?

How do you respond to the law of God, which tells you how you are to live your life? How do you respond to the call of the gospel, which compels you to come to Christ while you're in this day of mercy?

How do you respond to the gospel? Did you know that your saviour begs you to come? He commands that you come to him. You, the offend in the few, man, woman and child, the saviour commands you to come to Jesus Christ. Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. How do you respond to the word of God? Will you be like Herod and compromise his proof in order to please other people? Or will you seem to do as it saves?

[46 : 41] Herodias had a quarrel against John and wanted him to be killed, but she could not because Herod had compromised and put him into prison. Now you might look at this and say, probably the best of situations, surely. It's a good thing to have Herod compromised, right? He's keeping his wife, John's not dead. Surely this is a good thing. But there's a great danger of compromising the proof.

Because in doing so, you may become content, which is of second to me. Content in your compromise. Verse 20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and unholy, and observed him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

King Herod was content with hearing John in his own situation. He feared him. He knew there was something different about him. He saw John wasn't looking simply for his own gain, but to do the will of the Lord. John not only preached against sin, but he also practiced what he preached.

Herod perceived that John himself was a just and holy man. Heaven deep down knew that what John was saying was right. He understood that John was preaching the law of Almighty God, and that touched his own heart.

Now I wonder, does the law of God touch your own heart? How does the law of God make you feel? When you see the moral law, and then you see your shortcomings, how does that make you feel?

[48 : 26] You know, God doesn't demand that you do your best. He demands perfection. Doing your best will not suffice. James writes, for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet he offends in one point, he is guilty of all.

Nothing defiant, nothing unclean can enter into paradise. No matter how good you may think that you are, if you've broken just one of God's law, what would you have?

Then, you cannot enter into paradise. Without his holiness, no man shall see God. This is the law of God.

Well, how then can we enter into paradise? How can we be made holy? Well, friends, the law of the Lord shows us God's standards.

The apostle Paul tells us that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. The law is teaching you that you cannot do it.

[49 : 32] It says that you have come short of the glory of God. But it shows you the one in whom you cannot receive redemption. It's pointing to the one where you can find life.

The psalm we shall conclude with, the psalm from the psalm, the psalm says, God, you cannot write this the way he'll sinners show. God in his work has shown sinners how they can be saved.

How they can be perfected. How they can be made holy and declared righteous in his sins. As though they obeyed all of God's commandments perfectly.

And this is all done, not for anything that they do. But because of the work of the Lord, Jesus managed to save sinners. Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man.

Knowing that what he preached was true. He preserved John's life in prison. And the text also says that he did many things. Herod performed his lifestyle to what John was preaching.

[50 : 40] Perhaps he gave more to the poor. Perhaps he stopped cursing. Perhaps he stopped taking the name of the Lord as God in vain. Perhaps he even started reading the Torah, the Bible itself.

Whatever it was, Herod pursued some of the sins that John was reproofing. He was improving his lifestyle. And the text was on to say that Herod heard him gladly.

Gladly. These are solemn words. Herod threw John into the prison. He had thrown John into the prison. But he still heard him gladly. I wonder if this is the case for anyone here this morning.

As you hear the word preached to you every week. As you hear the voice of God speak. Not only in his word. But also through his providential means. Such as death.

Tribulation. Famine. Whatever it is that you hear the voice of God telling you that life is short. Death is sure. Sin is the cause. Christ is the cure. How is it that you respond?

[51 : 45] Do you only hear it gladly and not perceive it? Do you simply hear the word gladly and go home and continue your life and do nothing about it? You might like the idea of maybe one day following Jesus.

But you don't take action right now. You only hear gladly. As we come to the close of another year. How is it that you respond to the word of God?

When you hear the word of God showing you God's righteous standards. When it shows you your inability to keep his holy law. When it shows you the one in whom you can receive eternal life.

When you simply just hear the word gladly and do nothing else. This is a warning. Not only to unbelievers. But also to believers. Believers, how do you respond when you hear the word of God?

When you hear God's word preached to you. Do you seek to meditate upon it? Is the law of God your study day and night? Can you say what the sound is? Oh how love I thy law.

[52 : 54] It is my meditation all the day. Do you love God's law? Do you love God's people? Do you love the means of grace? Not only on the Lord's day but midweek as well.

Do you mourn to see God's word being thrown out of our lands? Do you mourn when people are wanting to take away the status of faith from our communities? Do you mourn when our nation now not only permits murdering the womb.

But that is also passed a bill which allows the suicide of some adults. Do you mourn when people go against the law of God in our lands? Well church of God we need to wake up.

We need to stop simply hearing the word gladly. We need to not only hear the word gladly but receive it with faith. Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only.

John heard John gladly but didn't receive the word. The other day I was at a gravesend.

[54 : 01] I was there I looked upon the servant tombstones. I always find it fascinating to see what is written on the various stones. It would normally be the person's name and then maybe a sentence to characterise their own life.

I wondered on your tombstone if these words could be said of you. They heard gladly. Is that the characterisation of your life?

Are you going to be like Herod who knew justice and holiness? Who compromised the truth but still wanted the truth to be preserved? Who heard the truth, who even changed his life?

In some ways according to the truth. He heard the word gladly but he didn't receive the word. So near yet so far.

Herod did many things but he didn't do the one thing needful. Then verse 21. When a queen of the king was come, that's headed on his birthday, he made a subject to his lord, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee.

[55 : 11] And when the daughter of the set of the odious came in and danced and pleased her, and then that sat forth. And the king said unto the damsel, ask of me whatsoever I will, and I will give it thee. And he swore unto her, whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee unto the half of my kingdom.

King David on his birthday feasted and celebrated. And while he was enjoying the luxuries and the company that he had, he was a bit too careless.

Sometimes when we get too comfortable, we let our own guards down. We only see the comforts around us. And we don't see the spiritual forces at work.

You know, King David in the Old Testament, when he backslid, it wasn't when he had the face of a life. Or the philisite, or whatever it may be. The men of Israel were out fighting.

But he was in the comfort of his own home. And he just walked out on the roof and saw a baby. He was enjoying the comfort of his own home. And the devil was at work.

[56 : 15] Don't let your guard your infants. Helen was enjoying the luxuries around him. Was pleased by the dancing, probably sensual dancing, of Philorionius' daughter.

And so he made an oath with her. He promises her that whatever she asks, she can go receive up to the half of his kingdom. Now we read of a similar question when we read in Esther, chapter 7.

Where King Hazelus asked me Esther, of her petition, saying he would give her to half of the kingdom. She made a godly request. She requested that she and her people might be preserved.

But here we see what wicked company produces. Herodias' daughter consults with her mother and makes a request for John the Baptist's head immediately on a plate.

They didn't even get time for Herod to consider, maybe in a few weeks. Immediately, I want John the Baptist on the head. You have made this hold to me. Whatsoever I will ask, you will receive. I want this immediately.

[57 : 21] What was King Hazelus' name? He had already compromised the truth. He was already content with the way things were.

He was hearing the word gladly. But unfortunately, his being content in his compromise led to a final heading.

The conclusion. Verse 26. And the king was exceeding sorry. Yet, for his oath's sake, and for the sake which sat with him, he would not reject her.

And immediately the king sent an executioner, and the commander said to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison. King Herod was content in his compromise.

And that led to this conclusion. That for the sake of his oath, and for the sake of those that sat with him, he would not reject Herodias' daughter.

[58 : 25] He was exceedingly sorry. He cared for the man of God. But he cared more for Herodias than for those who were around him. He knew John was just.

He knew John was holy. Yet, he had him to be beheaded. He did. He did many things. He heard John gladly. But that wasn't enough things.

It initially began with Herodias, not what he'd want to be killed. But his compromise led him to authorize the beheading of John the Baptist. He didn't want to do it.

Initially. But that came about because he didn't act upon the truth when he heard it. He wanted to please everyone. He wanted to compromise.

He didn't want to reject the girl and the company arriving. And so, in doing so, he rejected John. Well, friends, perhaps you are saying today that it's not your intention to reject Jesus Christ.

[59 : 25] It's not your intention to serve the enemy of God, which is the devil. You might be saying that that's not your intention. You might indeed even believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. That his word is truth.

Because if you don't act upon the truth, if you don't close in with Christ, this is your ultimate end. This is your conclusion. You're like a following the voice of death down into hell.

By not rejecting the world, you're rejecting Christ. If you seek to compromise the truth, then you're following the way of the harlot described in the Proverbs, which says, That house is the way of the house.

That house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. This is everyone's conclusion who is content with their compromise.

That they put to death and reject the voice of life. Well then, as we're reaching the end of this year, what will be your conclusion?

[60 : 29] Will it be said of you that you simply heard the word gladly? Or will you finish this year receiving the word? Heaven did many things, but he didn't do the one thing needful.

Will you repent and believe in the gospel? Will you be numbered among the people of God? The truth is the truth.

The truth is the truth. The truth is the truth. The truth is the truth. The truth is the truth. May it be that you will not be content in your compromise.

Simply come to church and hear the word. But the Lord will grant that your conclusion will not be the same as heaven. May it be that the Lord will open your heart so that as we close this year, you may not only hear the word gladly, but that you receive the word with faith.

Amen. Let us conclude the public worship of God by saying this today. In the well-known words of Psalm 25. Psalm 25, the first verse of Psalm.

[61 : 43] And we shall sing from verse 4 to the verse of Mark 9. Now we prepare to enter into a new year.

Let these words be sung not only from the mind, but let them be sung from the heart. That we would truly ask God, show me thy ways, O Lord.

Thy path so teach thy meaning. And do thy ways make thy proof, therein might each other. For thou art God that does, to me salvation says. And I am holy all that they expect in new attainment.

Thy tender mercies, Lord, I pay thee to remember. And loving kindnesses, for they have been of old forever. My sins and faults of you, do thy, O Lord, forget. After thy mercy, think of me and for thy goodness be.

God, good and upright is. The way, till sinners show. The meek in judgment, he will guide and make his path to know. Let us then conclude by singing these verses of Psalm 25, verses 4 to 9.

[62 : 47] To God's face. Show me thy ways, O Lord.

Thy path so teach thy need. And to thy need.

In thy truth, heaven's right, he shall be.

For thou art all such hours, To thee shall be.

And thy need. And thy need. And thy need. And thy need. The only need.

[63 : 48] Expect him to attend. Thy tender mercies.

And thy needs. And thy needs. My sins and faults forgive, do thou more forgive?

After thy mercy, take on me, come for thy good The way they'll send and come, the King's judgment He will guide, and hear His love to go Let us stand.

O Lord our God, we bless thee that thou hast indeed made the way known to sin. And we pray O Lord then, that as we hear of this way, that as we hear the word, that we might not do so only gladly, that as we hear thy word, that we would indeed receive it with faith.

Lord our God, may we conclude this year receiving thy word, and we pray now that thou art part us with thy blessing, that thou grant us heavenly mercies as we all seek to go home, that thou would be with us as we seek to go to another new year.

[66 : 19] O may thy presence not leave us, O Lord. May thy spirit not leave us, but be thou with us, both now and forevermore. For we ask it in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.