

The Gospel Advances Through Opposition

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[0 : 00] As we look forward to the preaching of God's Word, let's take His Word again and read from Mark chapter 6. Mark chapter 6. As we continue our study through this book.

And I will read from the second half of verse 6 through to verse 29. Mark 6, verse 6.

This is the Word of God. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave as a testimony against them.

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known.

Some were saying, John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him. Others said, he is Elijah. And still others claimed he is a prophet like one of the prophets of long ago.

[1 : 32] But when Herod heard this, he said, John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead. For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had bound and put him in prison.

He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him.

But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled.

Yet he liked to listen to him. Finally, the opportune time came. On his birthday, Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.

When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you. And he promised her with an oath, whatever you ask, I will give you up to half my kingdom.

[2 : 34] She went out and said to her mother, what shall I ask for? The head of John the Baptist, she answered. At once, the girl hurried into the king with the request, I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter.

He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. Amen. Let's hear the word of God preached.

Maybe not what you expected to hear on Father's Day, but this is where our study in Mark's gospel finds us.

And as we dip into Mark chapter 6 and verse 6, Jesus has already spent a year traveling throughout Galilee, preaching, healing, and driving out demons.

[3 : 41] Now, the region of Galilee was only an area about three times the size of Marshall County, so it's not a huge area. And Jesus has gone from village to village for a whole year throughout this region, with many little villages dotting its landscape.

Jesus had grown up in one of those little villages called Nazareth, and he stayed there until age 30. And now he's canvassed Galilee back and forth with the gospel, the good news of the only way of salvation through the Redeemer that God has sent, even Jesus himself.

Well, in our text today, we see him sending out the 12 once again to fill Galilee with the gospel.

Perhaps no spot on earth was more blessed with gospel light than Galilee.

Blessed Galilee. 700 years earlier, God had spoken of this region through Isaiah chapter 9, 1 and 2, this blessed spot on earth.

And this is what Isaiah prophesied. In the past, the Lord humbled this land, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along the Jordan.

[5 : 05] There, the people walking in darkness will see a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.

That was the prophecy. He is Jesus of Nazareth, God the eternal Son, become flesh, dwelling among us. The light of the world.

But though many heard him gladly, there were many as well that opposed him. Last week we saw that Jesus' own hometown of Nazareth, so blessed with light, was offended by him, stumbled over his ordinary humanity, concluding he's no Messiah for us.

Today we're going to see something more of the mixed response to Jesus here in blessed Galilee. And we'll see something of a dark cloud hanging over Galilee, pointing toward darker days that are coming.

So I just have the two points this morning. Galilee blanketed by six more evangelists, six more evangelistic teams. And secondly, the response of Galilee's King Herod to gospel light.

[6 : 21] So first of all, Galilee is being blanketed by six more evangelistic teams, verses 7 to 13. We read in verse 7, after Jesus had gone around teaching from village to village, verse 7, calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

Now Jesus' aim in doing this is to multiply his gospel workers, that he might cover the field of Galilee once again with gospel seed.

And so instead of just one team of 13, Jesus and the twelve, he's now got six teams of two. Mark has told us earlier in chapter 3 and verse 14 that it was for this very reason that Jesus chose the twelve. He says he chose them that they might be with him, and that he might then send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

So Jesus, by this point, has been training them for over two years. They've been listening to him. They've been watching him.

[7 : 35] And now it's time for them to go and do the same as his representatives. Maybe you can think back at the time when you were being trained, and then at some point had to go out and do the job yourself.

Maybe you were taking a newspaper route, and you went along with the guy for a while, and he showed you the route, and then came the day when it was just you and the newspapers, and you went out.

Some of you are pilots. Maybe you remember all those hours with another teacher on board with you, and then there came the day when you went solo for the first time. Or think of our troops going through basic camps, and then suddenly storming Normandy Beach for the first time with real bullets coming down on them.

Exciting times, but dangerous times as well. So Jesus wisely sends them out two by two.

Not alone. Because two are better than one. And they have a better return for their work. They can do more together than they can do as two apart.

[8 : 50] They can counsel each other and make fewer mistakes in their ministry. They can strengthen each other's hands. When one is lagging in zeal, the other can stir him up and say, Come on, brother.

Let's not quit. They can comfort each other in discouraging trials. And if one falls, his friend can help him up.

But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up. Ecclesiastes 4, 9, and 10. So two by two. And that's what we see in these disciples as they went out.

And later even Paul and Barnabas. Two going out together. So that's the first thing we see. He sends them two by two.

Then secondly, we see that he gave them authority and power to cast out demons and to preach his word. As he sent them out, he didn't leave them to their own resources, to their own weakness.

[9 : 46] But he gave them his power, his authority to go and to act on his behalf. That others might hear their words as if they were the very words of Jesus who sent them.

And then thirdly, he gave them specific instructions to follow. They were to travel light. Nothing extra taken along. You see, this itself was another training session.

Jesus is going to gather them together again after they've gone out. And they're going to have a debriefing. But they must learn to depend upon the Lord to provide all their needs. No food was to be taken. No money to buy food. They were to live upon the hospitality of the hearers and trust God to provide. And so armed with Jesus' power and authority to speak and act for him, they did go out and preach that people should repent. What was their message? It was the very message of John the Baptist. When he said, the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent. It's the very message that Jesus preached. [10:59] The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent. That's the message that his authorized apostles preached. It is the only authorized message from heaven ever to be preached in Jesus' name. You must turn from your sin. You're going your own way with your back toward God. Whether you're living in a basically moral, upright life. Or whether you are the lowest scum of the earth. You are going away from God. You said, I don't want it your way. I want it my way. You must turn and repent. You must repudiate your sin. You must repudiate your past. Any trust in your religious works. And throw yourself upon the mercy of God. That's the message that Jesus sent them out to preach. And they had the signs of the apostles accompanying them. The healings. The casting out of demons. To verify that their message was indeed the message from heaven through Jesus Christ. [11:59] So we've seen Jesus here in this first point. Sending out the twelve to multiply the seed all over Galilee. Are you helpers in scattering the seed? Are you praying for more workers to be sent out into the harvest field? Don't miss the heart of Jesus in this action. As he looks at the people in Galilee. He sees them as sheep without a shepherd. And he has pity for them. They're helpless and harassed by life's troubles. By the temptations of sin and the devil that hold them captive. And they have no power to set themselves free. And so with pity and compassion. Jesus sends six teams. Two by two. To bring what they need. The saving gospel of Jesus Christ. To turn from their way. [12:59] To God's way in Jesus Christ. And to be saved. Oh what a heart Jesus has. For the harvest field of men's souls. And then we did notice in the instructions given to them. That Jesus said if any place as you go. If any place will not welcome you. Or listen to you. Shake the dust off your feet when you leave. Take your sandals and knock the dirt off of your sandals. As a testimony against them. You see by leaving the dust off your sandals. You're saying. You're leaving a witness there in that village. That the spokesmen of Jesus were sent to this village. They were here. Look there's some of their dirt. And they brought you the gospel. But they had to leave because you refused to welcome them. And to listen to them. [14:00] And that will come back to haunt them in the day of judgment. As the testimony is given. Matthew's account says Jesus then said. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment. Than for those who had my messengers come. And they wouldn't listen. So it's a serious thing. It's a serious thing. To have the word of God. Brought to you. And to reject it. The words of Jesus. The gospel. The saving message. Of salvation in Christ. So the master here is preparing his disciples for rejection. As he sends them out. He's not giving them some. Oh well this will just be wonderful. No he's reminding them. You will be rejected. And when you have such. This is what you do. Remember he was just rejected in his hometown. [15:00] Earlier in this very chapter. They had tried to. His hometown had tried to kill him on an earlier visit. Back. Recounted in Luke chapter 4. And now on that. The second visit here in. In Mark 6. They remain as hardened as ever. And so he's telling his men. That they can expect similar treatment. Since they're carrying his word. His gospel. No servant is greater than his master. If they've persecuted me. They'll persecute you also. And they'll treat you this way. Because of my name. Because they do not know the one who sent me.

That I'm here from God. They don't know that. And so they'll reject you as well. Well in the same way. Some of you may be the only.

True believer in your whole family. And you might find that. Not everyone in the family is real happy. To hear the gospel from you. And they reject you. They don't want to listen.

[15:56] And they change the subject. Don't be surprised. They rejected. Your savior. The perfect. God man. You may be the only one in your work area.

At work. In your neighborhood. Jesus knows how to prepare you for it. So square your expectations with Jesus' words. He was rejected.

You can expect the same. In this same world. In which you live. So that's the first. Part of this. Text this morning. The second.

Part. Deals with the response. So the scattering of the seed over Galilee. Once more. The second point. Is the response of Galilee's king. King Herod.

To the gospel light. Now this Herod. Is Herod Antipas. He was a Jew. Though not a good one. As was his father.

[16:56] Herod the great. The father of the Herodian dynasty. Of kings. Kings in quote. Because they really weren't. Kings per se. They were puppet kings. Of Rome.

The real rulers of Palestine. Were the Caesars of Rome. They ruled with an iron fist. But. But they let. The Herodian dynasty of kings.

Rule over districts of Palestine. To take care of those troublesome Jews. And so. The Herods. Were set apart.

As these quote. Kings. And so Herod the great. You remember. He's the one in Matthew 2. Who heard about a. A baby king. Jesus born. King of the Jews. And.

He tries to. He sees it as a threat. To his throne. And so he tries to kill Jesus. At his birth. And.

[17:53] Ends up with the slaughter. Of the innocent. Two year old boys. In Bethlehem. Two years old. And under. That's Herod the great. This Herod's father.

That we're. Reading of this morning. He was as sexually immoral. As he was bloody. He had ten wives. And many children. Often killing the wives.

And their children. Or at least. In one case. Killing his wife. And two of their children. As they posed. Imagined. Or potential threats.

To his reign. He killed the brother. Of his wife. Drowning him in the palace. Swimming pool. He killed a mother-in-law. And 46 members. Of the Sanhedrin. He was a bloody man.

That was. Herod the great. And one of his sons. That survived all that mess. Was Herod Antipas. Of our text. And as we'll see. It was like father.

[18:50] Like son. So there's a message here. For you dads. On Father's Day. The question is. What are you doing. With your influence. Over your children.

God has placed you. In a position. Of authority. And influence. And you. You dads. You young dads. You know. The little guy. And the little. They're looking up to you.

Are you setting a good example? Are you teaching them. The word of God? Are you disciplining them. In the ways of God? Herod Antipas.

Is just like. His father. Herod. The great. We'll see. The same is true. Of Herodias. And her daughter. Oh may the Lord. Help us. In bringing up our children.

And then to pray. We never stop praying. For our children. And speaking truth. Into their lives. Using whatever influence. God has given us.

[19:48] Well when Herod the great died. His reign was divided up. Between his sons. And this son. Herod Antipas. Ruled over the territory. Of. Galilee.

Galilee. So. That's. Why he's brought up here. Galilee. And. This ministry of Jesus. And then of his. Six teams of two disciples.

Brought Jesus. To the attention of. Herod. In the palace. Verse 14. King Herod heard about this. For Jesus name has become.

Had become well known. So what did. Herod think about Jesus. Well there were basically. Three popular views. As to who Jesus was. Verses 14 and 15.

Some were saying. John the Baptist. Has been raised from the dead. And that's why miraculous powers. That are at work in him. Others said no. He is Elijah. And still others claimed.

[20:42] He's a prophet. Like one of the prophets. Of long ago. But when Herod heard this. He said. I'm going for number one. John. The man I beheaded.

Has been raised. From the dead. That's what he thinks. Jesus is. He thinks it's the. The man he beheaded. Come back. To life.

Clearly. John's head on the platter. Was haunting. This man Herod. And though he had silenced. John's rebuking voice. He cannot silence.

His own guilty conscience. That's condemning him. For his brutal. Beheading of John. John. And now he's. Superstitiously.

Thinking. He's back. He's back. And so Mark has to call a time out. A flashback. And tell his readers. Explain to his readers.

[21 : 39] Why and how. Herod beheaded. John. The forerunner of Messiah Jesus. So Mark gives great detail to it. As you heard it read. From verse 17 to 29.

For Herod himself. Had given orders. To have John arrested. And had him bound. And put in prison. Why would he do that? Because.

He did this. Because of Herodias. His brother Philip's wife. Whom he had married. What we're going to see. Is that. Herod may have worn the crown. On his head. But Herodias wore the pants. She was the one in charge. In this place. And she will manipulate. Herod to perform. Her will. And at her urging. She has Herod.

Yes Herod had issues with John too. But it was here told. That it was because of her. That he put her. He put him. In prison. So here we get a peek.

[22 : 39] Into the gross immorality. Of this Jewish Herodian family. Of kings. When Herod Antipas. Was visiting his brother. In Rome. He fell into a dalliance.

With his brother's wife. And they agreed. To ditch their. Spouses. And to get married. It was an adulterous affair. That destroyed two marriages.

And John the Baptist. Had been saying to Herod. And the tense is continuous. He said it more than once. It is not lawful. For you to have your brother's wife. And Herodias.

Hated John. For rebuking them. You know. People living. In darkness. Hate. The light. And they hate the bearer.

Of the light. Jesus said it in John 3. 19 and 20. This is the verdict. Light has come into the world. But men love darkness. Rather than light.

[23 : 36] Because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil. Hates the light. Hates it. Not a neutral. Well let's see what.

No. They hate it. They are hostile. Toward the light. And will not come into the light. For fear that his deeds will be exposed. And when the light. Does expose the darkness. They try to put out the light. That's what we see happening here. I wonder if you're taking. Stands for the moral law of God. In this immoral world.

If you are. You can expect to be hated. Darkness. Hates. Light. Light. Light. Light. Light. Is this not becoming clearer and clearer in our nation today.

There is no neutrality between darkness and light. Light. And I'm not talking about political parties. But about the darkness of sin. And the light of God's moral law.

[24 : 32] That condemns sin. Everyone who does evil. Hates the light. Jesus says. And they will not rest. From their hatred.

Until everyone approves of their darkness. Or else are snuffed out. That's what we see happening. In the palace of Herod. Herodias hated John.

For shining the light of God's law in her face. And so verse 19 says. Herodias nursed a grudge against John. And wanted to kill him. Wanted to put the light out. It was murder in the heart.

She wanted him dead. She wanted to kill him. But she was not able to. The text says. Why wasn't she able to kill him? She's the queen I suppose.

You'd say. Her husband's the king. Well that was just the problem. You see. Verse 20. She was not able to. Because Herod feared John. And protected him.

[25 : 31] Knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. And when Herod heard John. He was greatly puzzled. Yet he liked to listen to him. Here was a conflicted. Totally double minded man.

Herod. On the one hand. He respected. Even superstitiously feared John. Because he knew him to be a man of God.

A holy and a righteous. Do you know that a holy and a righteous man. Can win the respect of an evil man like Herod. The light. Shining.

And when he listened to John. He'd feel guilty. He'd feel convicted of his sin. He'd feel afraid of punishment. And yet. On the other hand. He had no willpower to repent of his sin.

He was a slave to his sin. He didn't want to change his ways. And so he's confused. He's greatly perplexed. And yet he liked to listen to John.

[26 : 30] There are people like that. Perhaps it's their way of. Kind of appeasing their conscience. I'll go to church. I'll hear preaching.

I'm not as bad as some. Ezekiel 33. God tells Ezekiel. Oh. All the people. They're living in sin. But still they like to come to hear you.

Ezekiel. And they're saying to each other. Come and hear the message. That's come from the Lord. My people come to you. Ezekiel. As they usually do. And sit before you.

To listen to your words. But do not put them into practice. With their mouths. They express devotion. But their hearts are greedy. For unjust gain. Indeed. To them. You're nothing more. Than one who sings love songs.

With a beautiful voice. Or plays an instrument. Well. For they hear your words. But do not put them into practice. Into practice. Are you a doer of the word? Or a hearer only?

[27 : 27] Deceiving yourself. Like Herod was. But finding some enjoyment. And listening. To the man of God. Well.

Herod protected John. He put him in prison. And Herodias. Herodias couldn't get him there. So he's protected. From her murderous design. In prison.

Herodias is frustrated. She wants to kill him. But can't. So verse 19 says. So she nursed a grudge. Against John. Now.

That's a word picture. To nurse a grudge. She had it in for him. But I wonder if you can see it. We have some nurses here. In our church. And how do you nurse a patient.

In a hospital. Well you feed him. Don't you. You're very attentive. To their needs. You make sure they get enough nourishment. And liquids. And their meds.

[28 : 30] And perhaps even exercise. You're very careful. To do all that you can. To keep them alive and well. On the road. To good health. How do you nurse a grudge.

A bitter heart of hatred. Well in the same way. You feed it. You water it. You give it whatever it needs. To keep it alive and well.

In your heart. On the screen of your mind. You rehearse it. Over and over. What they did to you. What they said about you.

How could they do that. And when you do this. You're more like Herodias. Than you are like Jesus. Who from the cross. Prayed father. Forgive them.

For they do not know. What they're doing. The Lord. Who is slow to anger. And then when he is angry. With his own people.

[29 : 28] How does he treat you. He does not stay angry forever. But delights to show mercy. Aren't you a walking testament. To that. I am. He will not always accuse.

Nor will he harbor his anger forever. He forgives. The transgression. Of the remnant of his people. But Herodias.

Just keeps feeding her hostility. Against John. She keeps the wound open. And bleeding.

Remembering what John the Baptist. Is how dare this wilderness man. Rebuke us.

Our private life. Is no business of his. And so her bitter hatred. Continued to grow. Do you have any of that. To confess to the Lord. Ask him to wash away.

He will. If we confess our sins. You see he's so. Delighting to show mercy. He'll forgive. Kill that grudge. Don't nurse it.

[30 : 28] Don't throw it a bone. Starve it. Don't give it another thought. Forgive as God. In Christ. Has forgiven you. Give mercy. Even as you've received it. Do you see why Jesus.

Exposed hatred and anger. As murder in the heart. In the sermon on the mount. Nobody's murdered yet here. All we have. Is a grudge. Of hatred. In the heart of Herodias. Being nursed. Oh but. But the story's not over. This hatred in the heart. Will lead to murder. And that's why Jesus says. If you have hatred in your heart. You've already broken. The sixth commandment. You see we're all.

Guilty. Before God's law. And must cry for mercy. That was Cain's problem. Wasn't it? He was angry. At his brother Abel. Righteous Abel.

Didn't do anything wrong. But God showed. Favor to Abel's offering. And not to his. And he's envious. God warns him. Sin wants to have you. But you must master it.

[31 : 24] That grudge. You better master it. He didn't. He watered it. Took him out in the field. And slaughtered his brother. The first murder in the world. And John says.

Don't be like Cain. Who belonged to the evil one. And murdered his brother. Anyone who hates his brother. His brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer. Has eternal life. In him. There's a reason.

Police call certain crimes. Hate crimes. Because hatred. Is murder in the heart. And it often. Finds its way. Into life. Well.

Finally. The opportune time came. Verse 21 says. Herodias has waited. And plotted long for this. It was Herod's birthday. He's going to be high. In spirits. She's got a plan.

And he gives a banquet. For his high officials. Military commanders. And leading men of Galilee. Anybody who was anybody. The VIPs of Galilee. Were all invited. And this was Herodias' opportune time.

[32 : 23] And so when Herod and his guests. Were well oiled with wine. She sends in her daughter. From a previous marriage. To perform a lewd erotic dance. For them. And Herod and his dinner guests.

Are pleased. And with his loose tongue. Herod says to the girl. Ask me for anything you want. And I'll give it to you. And to make his boastful promise. Sound even more pompous. In front of all of his guests.

He adds an oath. In God's name. Whatever you ask. I'll give you. Up to half my kingdom. If she ran out to her mother. For advice.

The one plotting this whole. Nefarious scheme. What shall I ask for? Mother. Mothers. It's not Mother's Day. But you too have influence.

Upon your daughters. They're watching you. They're listening to you. What is that influence? Doing with your children.

[33 : 21] What we find is. Salome. Is a spitting image. Of her mother Herodias. What shall I ask for? And the gruesome answer comes back.

The head of John the Baptist. And this daughter has so much of her mother's icy heart. That at once. She doesn't even think about all the things that she could have.

For her own pleasure. No. At once. She hurries back to the king. With the request. I want you to give me. Right now. The head of John the Baptist.

On a platter. Serve him up. Oh how the darkness. Hates the light. That a mother would use her daughter. For such wicked.

Designs. Well if Herod was confused. And perplexed before. About John. He's really in a hard spot now. Isn't he? He's on the hot seat. He's really.

[34 : 19] In great distress. Because on the one hand. He feared John the Baptist. As a man of God. Doesn't want to. Receive punishment for. Murdering him. His own conscience knew that.

That shouldn't be done. It was wrong for him to make such. A rash promise. And it was doubly wrong for him to keep it. But on the other hand. He had sworn an oath. And everybody heard it. And was watching to see. If he'd keep his boastful promise. To his. Wife's daughter. And so the king was greatly distressed. But because of his oaths.

And because of his dinner guests. He did not want to refuse her. And so his conscience was violated again. Because of the fear of man. He feared man more than God.

Was too proud to humble himself. In front of them all. And so he immediately sent an executioner. With orders to bring John's head. The man went. Beheaded John in the prison. And brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl.

[35 : 15] And the girl gave it to her mother. You see that's the way the guilt of that sin. Will be seen in the last day.

The beheader. The executioner. Brings it back to the girl. And she brings it back to the source. Of the bloody plot. They had a hand in it.

She is the one holding the head. And right here you see. Is the haunting scene. That Herod could not get out of his head.

And now he hears of this Jesus. With miraculous powers. He says. I know who he is. He is that man I beheaded. Come back.

To haunt me. When people don't believe the truth. They will believe anything. They can't believe Jesus is the Messiah. No.

[36 : 15] No. Not that. But they will believe he is. A beheaded man. Come back from the dead. Men can't believe. That in the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth.

But they can believe. That we all just came out of a little puddle of slime. And where did that come from? Well. Perhaps. Someone from a different planet.

Seated it here. You see. When someone refuses to believe the truth. They will believe anything. Any lie. Well. On hearing of his beheading.

John's disciples came and took his body. And laid it in a tomb. Matthew adds. Then they went and told Jesus. Now. Just two lessons and we are done. First of all. What is happening here?

Why is this in our Bibles? Why does Mark plug this long story. About John the Baptist beheading. Is he just a helpless pawn. On the chess board.

[37 : 15] Of a wicked king. And a wicked wife. No. This was. This was. God the king of kings.

Removing the forerunner of Christ. After he had run his race. He had finished. What God had him to do here. That was to prepare.

The way for Jesus Christ. And he had done that. You remember. He had. He had preached. There's one coming after me. That is. That is. Before me.

I am not worthy. I am not worthy. Of unloosing his sandal. And washing his feet. And he will baptize you. With the Holy Spirit. I baptize you with water. Prepare for his coming.

Repent. Turn from your way. And be ready. To receive the king. And then one day. Here he was.

But many were coming out. And following John. And being baptized.

[38 : 09] And then there went Jesus. And John says. There he is. He has come. John. Behold the Lamb of God. Who takes away. The sin of the world. Well they were slow. To leave John.

And to go after Jesus. And he says it again. There is the. There goes. The Lamb of God. And. And slowly. They started. To follow Jesus. But still.

Some stuck with John. And. And they were very jealous. Of John's. Name. And. And some of them. In John chapter 3. Come. And. And complain to John.

They say. You know that man. You talked about Jesus. He's on the other side of Jordan. He's baptizing. And. Everybody's going over to him. Shouldn't be.

Shouldn't. And. And John smiles. And says. Oh. That's just the way it should be. You see. The. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. I'm not the bridegroom.

[39 : 03] He's the bridegroom. Come from heaven. And. The bride. The church. Belongs to him. The believing community. Belongs to him. I'm just. The best man. I'm just one of his groomsmen.

And. And I rejoice to hear his voice. He's here. Follow him. Behold him. Trust in him. They're still hanging on to John. And here they are.

They hear that John's beheaded. And they get his body. And they go bury it. And then they go tell Jesus. You see. He's removing John.

A stumbling block now. To people. From following Jesus. He removes him from the scene. He's finished his work. What did John say? He said to those. Those fellows.

That were so jealous. Of his reputation. I must decrease. And he must increase. And God's way of removing him. From the scene. Was what we just read.

[40 : 00] And so John's gone now. And his disciples go. And tell Jesus. Well that's one thing that's happening. Many lessons. Perhaps. Could be drawn.

But I think there's a larger reason. For this story being inserted here. Mark continues to record. Two things that are happening. At the same time. In Galilee.

One. The kingdom of God. Is advancing. With the spread of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Two. As the kingdom of God. Advances. It meets with stiff opposition.

The gospel. Advancing. Stiff opposition. Now. We've seen this struggle. Of light and darkness. In Galilee. As it's being permeated.

With the gospel. And even as it goes out. Saving some. Antagonism. Is unleashed. The powers of darkness. Satan's demonic kingdom. Dogs him.

[40 : 55] And his disciples. At every step. The spiritual leaders of Israel. The scribes and Pharisees. Are plotting. How they might kill him. Jesus hometown Nazareth. Opposes him. Offended by him.

Rejects him. Even his family. His own brothers. Don't believe in him. And try to interfere. With his ministry. Unbelieving Galilee. Who would not welcome. His two men. Gospel teams. Into their town. Drove them out of town. And now also. We're told. That John the Baptist. The forerunner. The preparer. Of the way. For the Messiah.

Is beheaded. At a birthday party. For Herod. The king. Of Galilee. You see. We're seeing Galilee. Being penetrated. The darkness. Being penetrated. A great light. Is coming into the darkness. Of Galilee. And yes. Some are being saved. But we're seeing the opposition.

[41 : 50] Not just from religious leaders. But now. From the political leaders. Of government. And that does not bode well. For the Messiah. Whose forerunner.

John. Was. And that I believe. Is why. Mark. At least one thing. That Mark. Is wanting us to see here. He sees. John the Baptist. This bloody death. As foreshadowing. What awaits. His master. Jesus Christ. We'll see that later. In chapter 9. Indeed. Just one year later. This same Herod. Would meet. Jesus of Nazareth.

Face to face. The one who beheaded. His forerunner. Will now be looking. Into the eyes. Of Jesus of Nazareth. You remember. Luke 23. Jesus is being tried.

By the Roman governor. Pilate. And Pilate wants. To pass the buck. He doesn't see anything.

Wrong with him. And. And. And all the Jews. Are accusing him. Of. Of stirring up.

[42 : 46] Rebellion. All over Judea. And he started in Galilee. And has come all the way. Here to Jerusalem. Did you say Galilee? And learning that Jesus.

Was from Galilee. Under Herod's jurisdiction. Pilate says. Well let's send him. Then to Herod. That's his jurisdiction. He was in Jerusalem.

At that time. So they shuttled him across. To Herod's. Palace. And. This is what we read. When Herod saw Jesus. He was greatly pleased. Because for a long time. He had been wanting to see him.

From what he had heard about him. He hoped to see him. Perform some miracle. So he plied him. With many questions. But Jesus. Gave him. No answer. Then Herod and his soldiers.

Ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe. They sent him back to Pilate. And that day. Herod and Pilate became friends. Before this. They had been enemies.

[43 : 50] Friends now. In enmity to Jesus. As the joke of all jokes. Jesus of Nazareth. This is the kind of king. That he is.

Friends. In their enmity to Jesus. Herod's father had tried. And failed to kill Jesus. As a baby. Herod the son. Now has a hand. In the bloody death. Of Jesus. He's killed. The forerunner.

And now. He has a part. In his condemnation. As well. And all of this. Was God's plan. From eternity past. It was foretold.

A thousand years. Earlier. In Psalm chapter 2. The kings of the earth. Take. Set themselves. And the rulers. Take counsel. Against the Lord. And against his anointed.

Saying. Let's break their bands asunder. Let's cast off their cords. From us. We'll not be governed. By Messiah's laws. Against adultery.

[44 : 48] Against murder. He'll not tell us. What we can. And cannot do. We'll do as we please. We'll not have this man. To rule over us. He was made king. However.

As Psalm 2 goes on. He that sits in the heavens. Shall laugh. The Lord shall have them. In derision. Then shall he speak to them. In his wrath. And vex them. In his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king.

Upon my holy hill of Zion. You see. After Jesus' death. Burial. And resurrection. The father. Calls him home. And sets him.

On the throne. On Mount Zion above. The heavenly Jerusalem. Nothing they could do. Could stop him. From reigning as king.

He was made king. However. Thousand years. After Psalm 2 is written. He's there now reigning. In fulfillment of Psalm 2.

[45 : 45] And as the apostles. Then went out. And filled Jerusalem. With his doctrine. His gospel. They were arrested. And threatened. By the religious leaders. To never speak the name. Of Jesus again. And what they do.

They ran. To the church prayer meeting. Said let's pray for boldness. They didn't say. Pray for protection. They said. Let's pray for boldness. To go on speaking the word.

And so their prayer. Went this way. Sovereign Lord. You made the heavens. The earth. The sea. And everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit. Through the mouth of your servant. Our father David. Why do the nations rage.

And the people's plot in vain. The kings of the earth. Take their stand. And the rulers. Take counsel together. Against the Lord. And against his anointed one. Indeed. Herod. Indeed.

Herod. And Pontius Pilate. Met together with the Gentiles. And the people of Israel. In this city. To conspire against your holy servant. Jesus. Whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

[46 : 44] Now Lord. Consider their threats. And give us boldness to speak your word. Did you see? King Herod was named in their prayer to the king of kings.

As the one who fulfills Psalm 2. Maybe not filling it all up. But he's part of that fulfillment. Of the kings of the earth. Setting themselves against the Lord.

And against his anointed. His Christ. Christ. And Mark sees in the bloody death of John the Baptist. As a precursor to the bloody death. Of Jesus Christ. And King Herod.

Has his bloody hand in both deaths. So the lesson to the church. Of the first century. Who would be reading Mark's gospel. Or to the 21st century. You and I. It's the same lesson.

The gospel advances in this dark world. Through suffering. And persecution. And opposition. The blood of the martyrs. Is the seed of the church.

[47 : 40] After all. We are followers of the crucified. Don't be surprised. If you his servants are despised and rejected too. You are the light of the world.

A world sunk in darkness. So don't hide your light under a bushel. But let it shine. Before men. That they may come to know this Savior.

Men and women. Boys and girls. They all need to hear this message. Turning from their own way.

And trusting in Jesus alone to save them. I just heard yesterday from a Reformed Baptist pastor.

Who probably 10, 15 years ago. Planted a church. Right in the center of Rome. And he's gifted. And preaching.

And street preaching. And writing. And holding seminars. Exposing. The non-gospel of Rome. And the Vatican.

[48 : 39] And he was an embarrassment to them. And last week. The Supreme Court. Came in a decision against them.

Saying you. Are not a church. You're a business. And so. You owe us \$5,000. \$50,000. From back taxes. And from now on.

You will pay taxes. Like a business. You're not a church. And this is what. Pastor Leonardo. Writes. We know that where there is the progress.

Of the gospel. There also rages. A battle. The darkness hates the light. And opposes the light. But the darkness has not.

And will not. Overcome it. Jesus Christ. Is building his church. And the gates of hell. Will not prevail. Against it. Amen. Church.

[49 : 34] You are a chosen people. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people. Belonging to God. That you may. Proclaim the praises of him. Who called you out of darkness.

Into his wonderful light. Amen. Amen.