

# Matthew 14:1-12

September 1, 2019 – Rev. Rick Lyon

## Intro

**Rom. 2:14-15** - When those who don't have the law, *by nature* do the things in the law, they...show the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their *conscience* also bearing witness...accusing or else excusing them.

In Matthew 14 we find the story of a man whose conscience accused him and how he responded to it.

The man's name is Herod Antipas. Let me give you a little background on him:

- **Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great**
  - **You remember Herod the Great. He was the king who met the wise men...**
  - **Herod Antipas had several half brothers... one of them was named Philip.**
  - **Philip was married to Herodias, but when Herod Antipas saw Herodias, he divorced his wife, pursued Herodias and married her**
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## **1. A Convicted Conscience**

**Mt. 14:3-4** - Herod had laid hold of John (John the Baptist) and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Because John had said to him, "It's not lawful for you to have her." And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude because they counted John as a prophet.

**Mark 6:18-19** - Because John had said to Herod, "It's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him

*Why did they want to kill John?*

- **Because John told them the truth!**

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- **Because John told them, "what you're doing is wrong."**

*We're the same way, aren't we?*

- **We don't like it when we're wrong.**
- **We try to hide it or ignore it when we're wrong.**

**If you hide it or ignore it when you're wrong--you'll stay wrong!**

**2 Samuel 12:9** - "Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in His eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites."

**2 Samuel 12:13** - Then David said to Nathan, "I've sinned against the LORD."

**Proverbs 10:17** - Whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

**Proverbs 12:1** - He who hates correction is stupid.

**Proverbs 13:18** - Whoever heeds correction is honored.

**Proverbs 15:32** - Whoever heeds correction gains understanding.

**v.5** - Although he wanted to put him to death, Herod feared the multitude, because they counted John as a prophet.

**Mark 6:20** - Herod *feared John* and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly disturbed; yet he liked to listen to him.

There was a struggle going on inside of Herod.

- **On the one hand, he wanted to kill him**
- **on the other hand he liked to listen to him.**

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Someone said: "*The truth will make you free, but first it will make you miserable.*"

*How do you respond when someone corrects you?*

- *Do you get defensive?*
  - *Do you ignore what they say?*
  - *Do you get mad at them?*
  - *Or like David--do you consider what they have to say?*
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## 2. A Corrupted Conscience

In life you never stand still.

- **You're either growing to be more like Christ**
- **or you're heading in the opposite direction**

v.6 - When Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." And the king was sorry/distressed.

*Why was he distressed? What was bothering him? **His conscience!***

- **He knew John was a righteous man.**
- **He knew killing him was the wrong thing to do.**

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**v.9** - The king was distressed, nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it be given to her.

**Kent Hughes:** *How many people's consciences have been awakened to eternal things and their own sinful plight, and yet have buried it all because of what they feared their friends or family or fiancé or spouse or fellow-students would think. Some spend their entire lives basing their decisions on what other people think. There are politicians who for twenty years haven't made one decision according to their conscience, but rather according to what they think will get them elected or re-elected. There are business people who spend their entire day basing their decisions not on what's right, but on what will get them ahead. There are students who sell their souls to escape ridicule. More people than we realize have lost eternity because they feared what others think.*

## **3. A Condemning Conscience**

**The I.R.S. received the following note:** *"I've been unable to sleep for weeks now, knowing that I cheated on my taxes. I've enclosed \$100 to pay for my back taxes. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest."*

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## **4. A Dead Conscience**

There's an old Indian legend that there's an arrowhead in every person. When you do something wrong, the arrowhead turns and causes you pain. But if you continue to do wrong, the point on the arrowhead will break off and you'll be able to do wrong and it won't even bother you.

**Luke 23:4-8** - Pilate announced, "I find no basis for a charge against this Man." But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by His teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." When Pilate heard this, he asked whether

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Jesus was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod... When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased for he'd wanted to see Him for a long time, because he'd heard about Him and was hoping to see Him perform a miracle.

**Luke 23:9-11** - So Herod questioned Jesus at great length, but Jesus gave him no answer... Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

Someone wrote - It's possible for a human being to be so jaded that he or she can stand face to face with Christ and feel nothing. It's possible to so squash the repeated warnings of conscience that it becomes as if dead... A neglected conscience will suffer progressive desensitization to God so that we don't hear Him when He speaks.

### **Four ways to keep a clear conscience.**

#### **1. Read the Scripture.**

**Psalm 119:11** - Your Word, I've hid in my heart that I might not sin against You.

- **Saturate your mind with God's Word**
- **And then obey what it says**
- **Just do what's right to begin with**
- **That's the best way to keep a clear conscience.**

#### **2. Respond to the Spirit**

**Romans 9:1** - I speak the truth in Christ, I'm not lying, *my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.*

Don't ignore the Holy Spirit.

**In 1984, a Columbian Airlines jet crashed in Spain. Investigators recovered the "black box" and listened to the cockpit recording. It revealed that several minutes before the crash, the plane's automatic warning system told the crew repeatedly in English, "Pull up! Pull up!" But the pilot responded by saying, "Shut up, Gringo!" and turning the**

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**system off. Minutes later, the plane plowed into the side of a mountain and everyone on board died.**

**Hebrews 3:15** - "Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart."

### **3. Repent of Sin**

**1 John 1:9** - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### **4. Rectify the Situation**

**"Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart."**

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