

***Regret or Repentance?***  
***Mark 6:14-29***

Good morning.

Many people, including Christians, struggle with the idea that a Loving God allows pain and heartache to exist within our lives.

The truth is that every human alive, lives in a broken world until Jesus comes back for us.

Pain, heartache, and trials are universal; to believers and unbelievers alike.

There is no magic formula to escape the pains of this life.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in...

***Matthew 5:45 He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. NKJV***

But even though pain, heartache, and trials happen all the time; there are different reasons why they happen in our lives.

Today, I want to explore one of the reasons God allows pain in our lives, as we talk about regret and repentance.

Regret and repentance are often times miss indentified, because they often begin the same way in life; through pain.

Regret can easily masquerade as repentance, because they both have similar characteristics; but, how a Christian deals with them, is completely opposite from one another.

Please open your Bibles to *Mark 6* as we continue that study

Last week, Jesus headed to His home town and began to preach in the synagogue at Nazareth.

According to *Luke 4*, a year earlier, Jesus was rejected by these same people and removed from this same synagogue.

But on this occasion, instead of kicking Him out of the synagogue, these home town people choose to ridicule the Lord.

Jesus was amazing them by His teaching and His miraculous power; but, they would not buy into the fact that this blue collar worker from their own town is the Messiah and God in the flesh.

The end of *vs. 3* says, “*So they were offended at Him*”

Jesus’ heart was broken by their unbelief; so, He decided to send out His disciples with His authority and power to other places.

These Disciples were given special *power* over unclean spirits.

The Lord is working all around us, all the time; but, there are those who do not have **eyes** to see His miracles because of their unbelief, so they fail to recognize all He does.

Immediately after Jesus sent out the Twelve with special power for ministry, Herod Antipas hears of Jesus’ fame.

### **I. The confused king.**

Read *Mark 6:14-15*

Herod had murdered John some time before this; so here, Mark was filling in some of the details of what had happened before this for the sake of those who didn't know these facts.

Mark emphasizes Herod's paranoia and the growing threat on the life of Jesus.

Remember, as we learned before, the Pharisees and the Herodians were already plotting to kill Jesus; and now, Jesus was catching the attention of a powerful, paranoid, man.

Notice, Mark calls Herod Antipas a king, because Herod liked to call himself king; however, Herod was not a king.

When Herod the Great died, the Romans divided his territory among his three sons; so Herod Antipas was appointed ruler over Galilee, which was a client state of the Roman Empire.

Herod heard of Jesus because His Great name, His teaching, and His miracles which had become well known; even making their way into the Herod's palace.

***Psalm 135:13 Your name, O LORD, endures forever, Your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations. NKJV***

As Herod hears of all the miracles of Jesus, he begins to reason who this miracle worker was. **Herod's choices for who Jesus is**

**1. Herod believes *John the Baptist is risen from the dead.***

Herod had a very colorful background, with many superstitions; as he believed Jesus was a reincarnated John the Baptist.

We already know, John the Baptist is **not** John the Apostle.

The call for John the Baptist was predicted by the prophet Isaiah as a herald (a person who brings important news); to cry out to the people that Jesus the Messiah was coming soon.

John's message was for the people of Israel to repent and prepare the way of their hearts for the LORD's arrival; he used baptism as a means for the Jews to show true repentance.

Repentance boils down to one thing; a **u-turn**. We agree with the Lord about our sinful behavior; we turn from our sin and turn to the Lord instead.

Repentance is a 180 degree turn from sin and head toward God.

## 2. Herod believes Jesus *is Elijah*.

*Why would Herod think Jesus was Elijah?*

Herod misinterpreted an Old Testament prophecy Elijah would appear before the Great Tribulation; since Jesus was doing such great signs and wonders, Herod believed He was Elijah.

***Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. NKJV***

## 3. Herod believes Jesus *is the Prophet or like one of the prophets*.

Herod thought Jesus could be like an OT prophet or the Prophet, Moses had told the children of Israel the Lord would send.

***Deuteronomy 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear." NKJV***

Moses, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, promised a Prophet would come to Israel; this specific Prophet Moses spoke of was going to be the **Messiah** who was first promised in ***Genesis 3:15***

***Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." NKJV***

Jesus fulfilled both ***Deut.18:15*** and ***Gen. 3:15*** as the Prophet who defeated Satan, after Satan wounded Him on the cross.

The Lord's plan of salvation was to bring deliverance through the Seed of the woman; One born without a human father.

Little did Herod realize; his statement about Jesus being the Prophet was spot on; but, Herod was more convinced that Jesus was a resurrected John the Baptist than Messiah, the Prophet.

## **II. Regret.**

Read ***Mark 6:16-20***

Wiersbe said, "*Herod Antipas had married the daughter of King Aretas (Ah-reetes) IV and then had divorced her so he could marry Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip.*"

So John the Baptist spoke out against Herod's illegal marriage to Herodias, his brother, Philip's wife.

When John preached on repentance, he did not worry about the rich or powerful; he simply called sin, sin even against Herod, who could have had him killed for saying such things.

Herod, after being rebuked publically by John the Baptist because of his sin, then imprisoned John, rather than killing him.

At this time, a lot of the people believed John the Baptist came from God as a prophet of God; and Herod himself feared public opinion; but, did not **fear** the Lord.

***Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. NKJV***

The words, “***fear of the Lord***”, means reverence and respect; being in awe of God.

By placing John in jail, as a just and holy man, Herod protected him from being killed. Herodias, Herod’s new wife, was not as **forgiving** as Herod; she wanted to have John the Baptist killed.

Re-read ***Mark 6:20***

*What things did John the Baptist do that made Herod believe he was just and holy, which in turn, made Herod protect John?*

Herod witnessed how John lived his life;

Herod also heard John preach about the kingdom of God, and Herod knew what John preached, was the truth.

William Lane said, “*More weak than cruel, Herod listened to John with an undeniable fascination.*”

*“John’s word left him perplexed, and in anguish. Yet he found a strange pleasure in the **authoritative** preaching of this holy man, whose stringent life gave added power to his probing word.”*

Herod listened to John’s words because his life was an example.

### **III. Lust leads to a bad decision.**

Read *Mark 6:21-23*

When Herod’s birthday was celebrated, Salome, the daughter of Herodias came in before the king and his attendants, and pleased them with a **seductive** dance.

In his excitement over his step daughter’s dance, Herod promised to give Salome whatever she desired.

Some men may blame the girl for her seductive behavior; but of course, these men failed to guard their hearts and minds from lust.

***1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.***

***1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. NKJV***

#### **1. The first temptation is the lust of the eyes.**

One lesson, both men and women, can glean from this passage is about dressing modestly; but there is another lesson here about being careful what we allow our eyes to gaze upon.

Men are visually stimulated and stumble because of what they see. Men are similar to trout. They see a shiny necklace on a woman, and their eyes follow it like a fishing lure.

However, just because men are visually attracted, does not negate the fact that a man has a responsibility to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

***2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,***

***2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, NKJV***

Job spoke of this struggle: ***Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?"***

## **2. The second temptation is the lust of the flesh.**

Think about the narrative in ***Genesis 39***, where Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph and her flirting turned into sexual advances.

***Genesis 39:10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.***

Joseph showed remarkable faithfulness towards God, Potiphar, and himself, by resisting this temptation for so long.

Joseph knew how greatly his sin would affect others, because sin has a ripple effect; often times we want to deny the harmful effects our sin will have to ourselves and others around us.



Joseph never gave in to the illusion that he could sin and not be discovered, or that somehow it wouldn't matter.

As the Apostle Paul said in *1 Corinthians 10:13*, *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. NKJV*

When Potiphar's wife enticed Joseph, he said no; *he refused*.

Sometimes it just comes down to refusing and saying no to sin, even when they **feel** like saying **yes**.

Joseph did what we are all supposed to do when faced with this kind of situation: he fled and ran.

*James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. NKJV*

*2 Timothy 2:22* makes it clear: we should *Flee also youthful lusts*.

### **3. Third temptation was the pride of life.**

The pride of life is anything that leads to arrogance, pride in self, boasting, taking credit for something the Lord has done and anything that stands in the way of us obeying the Lord.

*1 Peter 5:5 "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

***1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, NKJV***

*How many times have we done things we have regretted because of decisions we made from the flesh?*

***Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.***

***Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. NKJV***

All three of these things, ***the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life***, described Herod, and negatively affected his **decision** making.

When Salome danced provocatively; he had to give her what he promised, even though he was sorry he made the promise.

#### **IV. Lust leads to death.**

Read ***Mark 6:24-29***

Remember, earlier we said that Herodias wanted to have John the Baptist killed; but, Herod actually protected him from being killed because John was just and holy.

After Salome spoke with her mother Herodias, she came to the king with a request to give her John Baptist's head on a platter.

Corrupt as he was, Herod was sorry, because he realized that John had done nothing worthy of death; even though Herod was mad about John calling out his sin.

Herod was between a rock and a hard spot and so he commanded John should be beheaded.

David Guzik said, *“The immediate reply of Herodias showed that the mother had this planned out all along.*

*“She (Herodias) knew her husband and she knew the situation, and knew she could get what she wanted this way.”* (Guzik)

The Apostle Paul said in ***Romans 7:8 sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.***

***Romans 7:9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.***

***Romans 7:10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.***

***Romans 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. NKJV***

Sin will always take you further than you want to go, and it will always cost you more than you want to spend.

The head of John the Baptist was given to Salome and she took it to her wicked, adulterous mother.

Notice vs. 26, *“And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.”*

Mark Wessel said, *“The depth of distress experienced by Herod for John the Baptist is expressed graphically by being ‘greatly distressed’. This is the same word used to describe Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane.”* (Wessel)

Herod did not want to kill this just and holy man; but, in his foolishness, he made a vow to his step daughter because of the lust within his heart.

*How did it all end for Herod?*

According to the Historian Josephus, Herod was defeated in battle and was exiled by Aretas (*Ah-reetes*) his ex father in-law.

Salome also reportedly decided to join Herod and Herodias in exile rather than be alone. As Salome was passing over a frozen river, the ice broke and she sank in up to her neck and died.

Some commentators say Herod and Herodias later committed suicide, so lust killed again. Lust can also kill within our lives; relationships, intimacy and other things as well.

## **V. Practical Application.**

*Mark 6:26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. NKJV*

Let's talk about the difference between regret and repentance.

Regret and repentance within our lives are often times confused, because they often begin the same; through pain or remorse.

Regret can easily masquerade as repentance, because they both have similar characteristics; but, how a Christian deals with them is completely opposite.

Regret can happen when we face **consequences** for our actions and sometimes we are simply sorry when we get caught doing something wrong.

***2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. NKJV***

Repentance does not save us; but, a true repentance is one of the proofs that we are saved and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Bob Flayhart said, *“Repentance says, “I want to stand on Christ’s record of righteousness and not my own.”*

*“It trusts that your failures, no matter the extent, are not fatal and ultimately the only failure is to **not** surrender your fears, guilt, sorrow, and sin to the love and goodness of Jesus.”*

Repentance should be part of the normal Christian life.

Our proper response to the knowledge that Jesus already knows about our sin, is to swallow our pride, turn from our sinful behavior, and run to Jesus.

Unfortunately, guilt and shame often cause us to stay away from the Lord; but, we are broken and deeply loved Children, with a Father who is waiting for us to turn back to Him.

Pain, heartache, and trials are universal; to believers and unbelievers alike; but, sometimes the Lord allows pain in our lives to lead us into repentance.

Repentance is for our hearts as much as it is about the Lord.

The enemy of our soul would love to have us live in guilt and regret; because then we will be rendered useless for kingdom business.

When self condemnation and guilt takes up residence in our minds, we are too self focused and will not be effective witnesses for Christ.

When we are **not** led by the Spirit, and feelings of guilt begin to take over, the result is embarrassment or self-condemnation.

***Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV***

As Christians, when we experience guilt or condemnation, we do not have to stay in that state.

A couple of weeks ago I said we must keep short accounts with the Lord when it comes to our sin.

A true Christian is not going to be disowned by the Lord when we sin; but, when we sin, we build walls up in our hearts that affect our relationship with God.

God doesn't change or move; we do. When we repent, we are having a change of mind about our sin, and we head back to God

*1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

*1 John 3:19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.*

*1 John 3:20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

*1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. NKJV*

We said, repentance boils down to one thing; a **u-turn**.

Repentance is when we agree with the Lord about our sinful behavior; we turn from our sin and turn to the Lord instead. It's a 180 degree turn from sin to God.

When we repent and allow the Spirit to direct us, we will experience healing and **transformation** from the Lord who longs to be in relationship with us.

Repentance clears our conscience and deepens our relationship with the Lord. There's not a thing to regret about that.