

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script – December 30, 2009

It blows our mind to read and hear about the horrible, despicable things people can do in our modern world. How can human beings be so inhumane? What is wrong with some people? In today's Templates of Truth, we meet a dysfunctional family with serious issues.

In chapter six of his Gospel, Mark introduces us to a deranged family. The wicked King Herod stole his brother's wife, Herodias, and married her for himself. She hated John the Baptist because he had no qualms about declaring the immoral nature of their relationship. Herod appeased his wife by having John arrested and placed in prison. Their daughter, Salome, was an obviously attractive and loose young woman. Together, they manifested a quality that is characteristic of the pagan nature of our world today, especially as it is personified in this scrupulous young daughter. There are three traits we can note about her.

First, she had no shame. Mark reports that on his birthday, Herod *gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee; and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests* (Mark 6:21-22). Life is just a party in general for many people as it is, and it is usually at a party that behavior gets wild and disgraceful things can result. This party was no exception. Salome didn't perform an interpretive ballet. Her dance was a lurid, seductive and sexually stimulating display that accomplished its intended effect – all the men were *pleased*. Imagine a daughter performing a strip-tease for her father and his friends, and her father being proud and pleased about it. So pleased in fact, he offered to give her anything she wanted, up to *half of my kingdom* (6:23).

The second trait we note is that she had no supervision. Upon hearing Herod's offer, Salome *went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"* (6:24). It is obvious this young girl had no ethical or moral parental guidance. She was obviously allowed, probably even encouraged in her lustful demonstration. Had she had proper supervision, you would have been prohibited from such behavior, or at least urged to take the route of Queen Vashti, who refused such dishonorable and shameful behavior, even to her own demise (Esther 1:10-12). Herodias seized the opportunity to bring final fulfillment to her hatred and order her daughter to request *the head of John the Baptist* (6:23). That she used her own daughter to deliver John's death verdict exemplifies the evil and shameless nature of this wicked mother.

Finally, we see that Salome had no standard. No conviction held her back. No constraints countered her intent. There was no weighing of the matter, no law to apply; there was just pure, impulsive indulgence that reaped one shame upon another, quickly and relentlessly – *and immediately she came in haste before the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me right away the head of John the Baptist on a platter."* (6:25). Notice that she took ownership of her mother's idea – *I want you*. Notice also the delicate touch she so deviously added – *the head...on a platter*. This girl exhibited mindless, ruthless and unrestrained delinquency in her demands. Herod, more concerned with his word and reputation to his court than to the life & honor of a godly servant, quickly obeyed: *immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head* (6:27). Thus, John the Baptist became the New

Testament's first martyr of the faith.

Our pagan society today is a lot like Herod's family. There is no shame. Blatant sexuality in all its immoral glory permeates every marketable media of technology. Laws of discretion are being eradicated for their claim to violate individual rights and freedom of expression. Pagan society has no standard or supervision to enforce it. In fact, there is resentment and rejection to many authorities. The rules are being thrown out or changed in order to accommodate indulgent desires. We live more and more in a world where anything goes. If it feels good, do it; and if there is anything you don't want to do, you don't have to. As a result, we have a world enflamed with its own pride, immersed in its own purpose, and centered solidly around its own whimsical needs and desires for happiness and fulfillment in life. None of it is founded in any way on God.

In reality, this behavior should not surprise us. People who live apart from God and the standard of His Word behave exactly like Herod, Herodias and Salome. They don't know any better because the transforming power of salvation has not yet been their experience. Of all the things they need, first and foremost, they need Christian believers to share with them the life-altering Gospel of Jesus Christ. The abundant life in Christ can then become their standard and their supervision, giving them hope and guidance for a better life. When was the last time you shared your faith and the plan of salvation with someone lost without Christ?

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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