

# A Preacher Who Lost His Head

**Introduction.** In Matthew 11:7-11, Jesus gave a ringing endorsement of a truly great man. This was a man of character, consistency and humility. But perhaps his most noteworthy characteristic was his courage. John the Baptist's preaching made enemies. In fact, one could say he "lost his head" preaching the truth (Mark 6:14-29). What he preached and the reactions it caused continue to be relevant today (Galatians 4:16).

## I. ***Because Of A Powerful Rebuke***

A. Adultery must continue to be condemned, not comforted.

1. A scriptural marriage is one where both man and wife are bound by God's law for the rest of their lives. The only exceptions are adultery and the death of the spouse.
  - a) Hebrews 13:4.
  - b) Romans 7:2-3.
  - c) Matthew 5:32; 19:9.
  - d) 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.
2. Comfort is being given to adulterers today by false teaching.
  - a) Some brethren are redefine divorce and remarriage as treachery against the covenant; that is, someone no longer can live in adultery. Divorce is sinful, but this doctrine removes the consequences as far as remarriage is concerned. This doctrine began as a word play on "not under bondage" in 1 Corinthians 7:15.
  - b) Some brethren are also contending that all remarriages are eventually legitimate. This is the next logical step from the preceding doctrine. If one person is not bound, then the other person is obviously not bound as well. People who are in adulterous marriages are encouraged to stay in them because divorce is wrong, but one cannot live in adultery.
  - c) Some brethren contend that alien sinners are not amenable to Christ's laws on divorce and remarriage. This allows couples who were divorced and remarried prior to their baptism to remain in an adulterous marriage (Matthew 19:9).
  - d) Some brethren have said that an unscriptural divorce is not a "real" or "lawful" divorce. This allows for a mate who did not want a divorce to be able to "put away" their mate in their mind or heart after that mate has filed for an unscriptural divorce and committed adultery with another person.

B. Evidence of compromise with sin.

1. The reputation of the teacher, emotions and charges of "judging" are having their effect (1 Corinthians 4:6).
  - a) Some feel that we ought not to preach on these subjects, while

others feel that we ought not to discuss and mark false teachers and sadly others accept into the fellowship of the church those who have been unlawfully divorced and remarried.

- b) But peace at the expense of truth causes fellowship with sin, the dishonoring of Christ, the encouragement of disobedience and it lessens respect for the truth.
- 2. The church has an important present need.
  - a) We must continue to emphasize the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage.
  - b) We must continue to warn against adultery in all its forms.
  - c) We must continue to encourage purity, obedience and perseverance.
  - d) We must continue to show John's courage in teaching truth and exposing sin.

## II. ***Because Of A Rash Vow***

- A. Promises made before God are serious.
  - 1. A rash tongue is indicative of a hasty heart (Ecclesiastes 5:2).
    - a) Think of Jephthah after his vow (Judges 11:30-31, 34-40)! Abraham Lincoln once said, "We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called on to perform what we cannot."
    - b) Tongue control means a very careful consideration of everything we intend to do in the service of God.
  - 2. Every vow that we make before God had better well be kept (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5). Thomas Fuller once exclaimed, "Vows made in storms are forgotten in calm."
    - a) This includes our vows made before God in our conversion (Matthew 24:13).
    - b) This also includes our vows made when we marry (Romans 7:1-4).
- B. Rash speech damages others.
  - 1. Our speech must be tamed so it is beneficial to others. The same mouth should not bring forth blessing and cursing (James 3:7-10).
  - 2. This includes speech between parents and children, husbands and wives and brethren in the Lord's church (Colossians 4:6).

## III. ***Because Of A Dancing Daughter***

- A. Dancing excites unlawful lust.
  - 1. Galatians 5:19 says that one of the works of the flesh is "lasciviousness." "Lasciviousness" is defined as "unbridled lust, shamelessness, wanton acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females."
  - 2. This is a perfect definition of dancing and specifically constitutes

both the lust of flesh and the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16).

B. What are parents to do?

1. Exercise parental responsibility to train children in the dangers of dancing (Proverbs 22:6). In this case, parental permission precipitated passion! Herodias encouraged it (Mark 6:22-24).
2. Do not close your eyes to the attraction it will have on your children. Prepare them for the pressures of rejection and isolation for doing what is right.
3. Herod did not even dance, but he was still enticed to sin. This is analogous to entering a burning house to watch it burn (1 Peter 2:11-12; 2 Corinthians 6:17).

**Conclusion.** The sad and sinful story of John, Herod and Herodias unpleasantly reveals how people react to truth. Some, like John the Baptist, have courageous conviction without compromise. Others, like Herod and Herodias, are vindictive, unrepentant and lost. Would you lose your head for the truth of God? It is certainly a worthy question!