

# Small Group Discussion Guide

Mark 6:14-29

“All to Him I Owe”

Based on Sunday's  
Sermon 1/11/2026

## Background

When Jesus was born, Herod the Great, an evil puppet king placed over Israel by Rome, dreamed of becoming the emperor of Israel. He was so jealous that he ordered all the male toddlers at Bethlehem murdered to kill the Messiah. He even killed two of his own sons, suspecting they might want his throne too soon. After Herod the Great died, his “kingdom” was divided among his three wicked sons, Antipas, Philip, and Archelaus (see family tree, other side). Archelaus inherited Judea, Antipas was given Galilee and Perea, and Philip inherited the Gentile areas east and north of the Sea of Galilee. Caesar Augustus quickly removed Archelaus after so many bad reports about him from the Jews. That is why Judea eventually was under the rule of Pontius Pilate. The Herod of Mark's passage is Antipas. Herodias (sounds like a relative to me), is both Herod Antipas' niece and sister-in-law. When Herod Antipas married her, he broke all laws of decency and morality. John the Baptist confronted them about their sin and was then cast into prison. John the Baptist took a stand for the Lord and eventually gave the ultimate price, his life. This passage is a reminder of the evils of this world and the calling upon God's people to deny self, take up the cross of Christ and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

## Discussion Questions

### Getting Started

1. This heavy story makes it difficult to start with a “fun” question. Instead, how about starting out by discussing what is known about John the Baptist. He was the last great prophet of the old covenant and the herald of the new. Passages to consider and for further study:
  - His miraculous birth and early life (Luke 1)
  - His prophetic calling in the O.T. (Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1)
  - His ministry of repentance and baptism (Matthew 3, Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-20, John 1:19-34)
  - His testimony about Jesus (John 1:29-34, 3:27-30)
  - Jesus' evaluation of John (Matthew 11:1-19)
  - His courage, imprisonment, and martyrdom (Matthew 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-29)
  - His legacy in the early church (Acts 18:24-28, 19:1-7)(Suggestion: Pick a few verses now to read, but save the rest for individual study throughout the week)

## Observation

2. Read Mark 6:14-29. How does Mark describe Herod's relationship with John before the arrest?
3. What emotions or motivations seem to drive Herod during the banquet scene?
4. What actions lead directly to John's death?

## Interpretation

5. Discuss the twisted logic of Herod's sin, and that of those who do not know Christ. (Example: keeping his word to her, but murdering an innocent man)
6. How does this passage teach that "being sorry" just isn't enough?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. How does this account of John's death show the extent of self-sacrifice that is the calling of every follower of Jesus?

## Application

8. John the Baptist was a martyr for the Lord. What are you willing to stand upon even if it means being a martyr?
9. We may never be put in a situation to die for Christ, yet how does being willing to change how we live for Christ?

