

*Where we start . . .*

You might hear it waiting in line at the airport. Or maybe someone will say it while you are looking for a table in a crowded restaurant. You'll here someone say, "Don't you know who I am?!" What is typically behind that kind of question?

*What we read . . .*

It might be easy to think that if only people really thought rightly about us, they would treat us well. But, as we will see, that just may not be the case. Read Mark 6:1-29.

Why did the folks in Jesus' hometown not receive Him better?

What does Jesus suggest will be the response His disciples could anticipate from some?

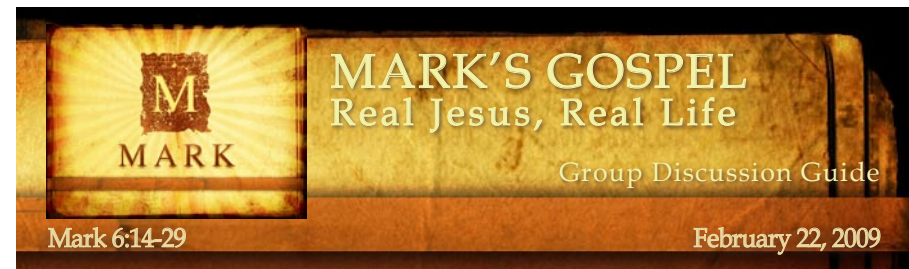
Look closely at the "reception" John the Baptist got from Herod. What was Herod's initial assessment of John?

Ultimately, what would you have to conclude about Herod's thoughts about John?

*Why this matters . . .*

As we live out our lives as followers of Jesus, we might think that if only people knew "who we were" (Jesus' friends!) they would treat us well. Will this necessarily be the case? Why or why not?

What does Jesus' reception at the hands of His hometown and John's reception at the hands of Herod tell you about the perspective you need to maintain as Jesus' follower?



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*Diving in . . .*

As we continue in Mark, we will find that he is weaving a couple of strands together for us. Last week, we noticed how the ministry of the disciples is going to mirror Jesus' own ministry. And this week, as Mark adds to the account of what happened to John the Baptist, we catch a glimpse of what else might well be in store for those who seek to live out the purpose and personality of Jesus.

*Discussing . . .*

Last week, looking at Jesus' poor reception and the possibility of rejection by others of the disciples' ministry, we looked at some possible implications of what Mark was telling us. Things like . . .

Those who think they know us well might be the ones least likely to listen to the story of how we have been changed by grace.

Even when we are doing exactly what God intends, we might not get a warm reception.

No matter how great our desire to serve, some might not be willing to receive service from our hands.

Keep those thoughts in mind (and raise them when appropriate) as you press on in Mark this week. We will be drawing on last week as we incorporate Mark's next section into our study.

The opening question shouldn't be too much of a puzzle. When someone cries out "Don't you know who I am?!" he or she is typically assuming that if only people knew who she or he was, then he or she would be treated better, treated differently. But although that might work, to some degree, in the world of commerce and business, it doesn't seem to be the way things typically play out in the Kingdom.

As you read back over Mark 6:1-6, it is clear that Jesus' own family members don't receive Him well. They see and know some of what He has done and have heard His amazing teaching. But, they aren't really that impressed. They reject Him.

When you listen to what Jesus then tells His followers about their first little "missionary adventure" in Mark 6:7-13, it is clear that they should anticipate

that everyone won't receive them warmly. Yes, some will entertain them and show them hospitality; but Jesus makes it clear that they will not be received well by all.

And then we get to the account of Herod's treatment of John—but it's "sandwiched" in between 6:13-14 and 6:30, which is about the disciples going out and ministering as Jesus has commanded them.

As you read about Herod's treatment of John, you can tell that Herod had a mixed reaction to John. He liked listening to him; but didn't want John to be able to freely minister. He recognized John as a holy and righteous man; but he ends up putting John to death on a whim.

Why all this attention to John's death at Herod's hand? (Mark spent only a handful of verses telling us about John's ministry in chapter 1 but takes sixteen verses to tell us about his death!) Apparently there is a point to notice here.

What can we conclude about John from what Mark tells us here? Simply this: John did what he was given to do, regardless of the outcome. He was faithful to his call. And, it wasn't about how Herod responded (or didn't) to him. In that sense, it wasn't *about John*. It was about doing what he was given to do.

Well, that fits what Mark has told us about Jesus. He was doing (in going to Nazareth) what He was given to do. And they didn't receive Him well. So what did Jesus do? He just kept on doing what He was all about. (Notice the last half of Mark 6:6.)

And this fits what Jesus tells His disciples in giving them instructions for their adventure. "As you do what I have given you to do, some won't receive you very well. But, just keep doing what I have given you to do." (This is the idea behind 6:11.)

So, sandwiched in between the report of the disciples' going and the report of their return is the report that John simply and faithfully did what he was given to do. John was killed for doing what he was given to do. The disciples might get rejected (like Jesus had); it might even mean they, also, could face physical threats.

And the point? Perhaps this: It's not about you; it's about faithfully doing what you are sent to do.

You may not get treated the way you think you should as a friend of Jesus, as one of His "representatives." But that's OK. It's not about you. Some might listen; some might not. Some might welcome you; some might want your head on a platter. But that's OK. It's not about you; it's about faithfully giving ourselves to what Jesus calls us to.