

Week of February 19-25

*This week's devotional-writer is Mark Kiburz. Mark serves on our Board of Elders and is currently pursuing his ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God.*

## **FOOLISH WORDS, FATEFUL CONSEQUENCES**

Scripture Reading: Read Mark Chapter 6

People will sometime commit to things by using words such as “I swear” or “I promise”. In moments of inspiration it is not uncommon for even Christians to say something like “Lord I promise I will never do .... this again”. Promising or swearing on something is called an oath. Our oaths can force us into situations that can damage people including ourselves. Chapter 6 shows us some of the consequences of making an oath.

John the Baptist rebuked Herod for marrying his brother Phillip's wife, Herodias. The Scripture indicates that Herod placed John in jail because of Herodias. Her hatred of John because of godly truth may suggest that she was being personally convicted of adultery in her marriage to Herod. Herodias was a manipulating person as is evident when she used her daughter to trick Herod into making an oath in front of his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias preyed on Herod's pride and an oath he made to her daughter. This is a perilous point in Herod's life and he failed to honor truth over reputation. Once Herod made an oath to Herodias' daughter he was bound by word and action to fulfill that oath. If Herod did not fulfill the oath, those around him would have rejected him as a leader. Herod placed himself into a corner with no way out.

As believers we are warned by Jesus in Mathew 5:33-37 not to take oaths. We are simply to let our “yes” be “yes” and our “no” be “no”. Solomon warns us, “When words are many, sin is not absent but he who holds his tongue is wise.

John spoke truth to Herod which Herodias did not want to hear. When the Word convicts the heart of people there are generally four possible responses: **1. Ignore the Word** (just keep on doing what you're doing); **2. Remove the word** (eliminate those who tell the truth); **3. Change the truth** (persuade people to believe the untruth is the truth); or; **4. Accept the word** (realize the Word is from God and follow the Word). Herod refused to accept God's word, Herodias tried to remove and change God's word. Herodias' actions indicate a hardened heart against God. Such a heart brings much pain and agony to yourself and those around you and will not allow God to enter your life. When we accept God's truth, however, it allows Jesus to free us to serve Him.

Like John the Baptist, our walk Christ at some point and time may require us to stand up for Him. Are you standing with a hardened heart or a servant's heart?

**Action Step:** Take a moment and think about any ungodly oaths you may have taken or if you have hardened your heart toward Jesus.

**Prayer Focus:** Ask God to release you from any ungodly oaths and to soften your heart toward His will in your life.

**Take-a-way:** Our words can place us in perilous situations. So speak carefully.