

August 28

Evil's Temporary Victory

“What is your petition, queen Esther?...Even to the half of the kingdom.”...

“If it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold...to be slain”— Esther 7:2-4

[Mark 6:12-29, Perea] They went out and preached that people should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed many with oil who were sick, and healed them. King Herod heard this, *all that was done by him, and he was very perplexed*, for his name had become known. *He sought to see him*, and he said, “John the Baptizer has risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” But others said, “He is Elijah.” Others said, “He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets.” But Herod, when he heard this, said, “This is John, whom I beheaded. He has risen from the dead.” For Herod himself had sent out and arrested John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, for he had married her. For John said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him, but she couldn’t, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man. *When he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude (because they counted him as a prophet) and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed, and he heard him gladly.*

Then a convenient day came, that Herod on his birthday made a supper for his

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nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and those sitting with him. The king said to the young lady, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” He swore to her, “Whatever you shall ask of me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”

She went out, and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?”

She said, “The head of John the Baptizer.”

She came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptizer on a platter.”

The king was exceedingly sorry, but for the sake of his oaths, and of his dinner guests, he didn’t wish to refuse her. Immediately the king sent out a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring John’s head, and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the young lady; and the young lady gave it to her mother.

When his disciples heard this, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb, and they went and told Jesus. [Matthew 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9]

1. How would you have felt hearing this, if you were Jesus? Was he tempted to despair?
2. When has evil seemed to triumph in your life? What ended up happening? Who did it?
3. Jesus, your innocent cousin was imprisoned and killed; I know you can relate to my...