

MARK

Mark Wk 22
Pastor Chip

General:

- Pastor Chip quoted The Lion King: "You are much more than you've become." When you hear that, where do you sense a gap between who you are today and the person God is forming you to become?
- This passage is one of the darker stories in Mark's Gospel. What disturbed, surprised, or stood out to you most as you heard the events unfold?
- When you look back on bad decisions from your past, did they usually begin with one obviously terrible choice, or can you trace them through a series of smaller decisions along the way?
- Pastor Chip said, "When we live for the applause of people in our life, we're in trouble." Where are you most tempted to let other people's approval influence decisions you know you shouldn't make?
- Why can knowing the right thing be insufficient when our reputation, relationships, or status are at stake?
- Pastor Chip highlighted several literary connections throughout this story (Esther, Jairus' daughter, Pilate, ultimately Jesus). Why do you think Mark wants us to see John's death as part of a larger story rather than simply an isolated tragedy?

Take Home 1: Temptation doesn't always attack us where we are the weakest; sometimes it shows up in places where our weaknesses will be the strongest (Mk. 6:21a)

- Why do you think temptation is often hardest to recognize at the beginning?
- What kinds of circumstances tend to make you less spiritually alert or more likely to compromise?
- When are you most vulnerable to compromise? When you're tired? Lonely? Angry? Discouraged? successful? Bored? Something else?
- What guardrails could you put in place now (before an "opportune time" arrives) rather than trusting yourself to make the right decision in the moment?

Take Home 2: Herod's banquet is a parody and reversal of the kingdom of God (Mk. 6:21b)

- The sermon contrasted two kingdoms: one climbs over people to gain power, while the other goes underneath people to serve them. Where do you see those two approaches competing in everyday life?
- Pastor Chip asked, "Where have we as Christians begun to want Herod's kind of kingdom while claiming to follow Jesus?" Where do you think that temptation shows up in the church or in Christianity today?
- Is having power or influence itself contrary to the way of Jesus? If not, what distinguishes using influence to serve people from using people to gain influence?
- When you disagree with, compete against, or feel threatened by someone, what reveals whether you are responding according to Herod's kingdom or Jesus' kingdom?
- How should following Jesus change the way you use whatever authority, influence, or leadership you have?

Take Home 3: With Jesus, death never has the final word (Mk. 6:29)

- What situation in your life currently feels final or outside of God's ability to redeem? How does the resurrection challenge that perspective?
- What is the difference between hoping that God will fix a particular situation and having hope because of who Jesus is?
- Pastor Chip drew attention to the literary connection with Salome at the empty tomb in Mark 16. How does the movement from a story ending at a tomb here to the empty tomb at the end of Mark reshape the way we understand apparent defeat?