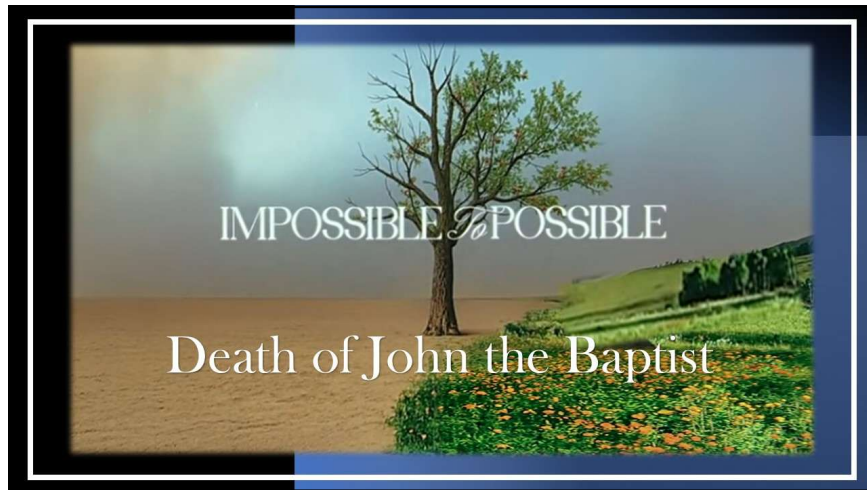




1

Matthew 14 (ESV)

1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, 2 and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." 3 For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, 4 because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.

2

Matthew 14 (ESV)

6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, 7 so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9 And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. 10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, 11 and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

3

Big Idea

When following Jesus hurts, go to Jesus because He understands your pain, walks with you in it, and is the only One who can carry you through it.

4



Faithfulness Has a Cost

- John the Baptist shows us that following God boldly will sometimes hurt, but God sees, remembers & honors faithfulness.
- John spoke truth because he feared God more than man.
- He wasn't reckless; he was obedient.
- His courage came from being in God's presence.
- John had stood before the One who made Herod; therefore, Herod seemed small.

5

6

Faithfulness Has a Cost

- Faithfulness often brings opposition - Herodias hated John & pushed for his arrest.
- God's people have always spoken truth to power - Elijah confronted Ahab; John confronted Herod.
- Speaking truth will cost you something ("The question is never whether speaking the truth will cost you. It will.")

7



8

Small Compromises Become Big Consequences

- Herod shows us how fear of people, careless words & quiet compromises can lead to spiritual collapse.
- Herod feared people more than God - He wanted to kill John but feared the crowd.
- His reckless words trapped him - "Whatever you want" sounded powerful, but it enslaved him.
- Herod's audience controlled him - He acted to impress guests rather than honor conscience.

9

Small Compromises Become Big Consequences

- Sin ferments, it never sits still ("Sin ferments... until it wrecks everything.")
- Moral collapse happens slowly ("Not one dramatic fall but a thousand small steps in the wrong direction.")

10



JESUS MEETS US IN OUR PAIN

11

Jesus Meets Us In Our Pain

- John's death shows that God does not always prevent suffering, but He never abandons His people in it.
- His death was unjust, yet God was not absent ("What looks like silence is not the same as God's absence.")
- Faithfulness is not a guarantee of comfort - God's goal is Christlikeness, not ease.

(Romans 8:28–29)

12

Jesus Meets Us In Our Pain

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28–29 ESV)

- God uses suffering to advance His kingdom (Ugandan martyrs' deaths sparked revival.)

13

Jesus Meets Us In Our Pain

- Jesus understands our pain - He, too, was rejected, betrayed & killed unjustly.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15 ESV)

- God promises ultimate healing ("He will heal you in this life or the next... He will make you whole.")

14

Practical Applications

- Choose God's voice over the crowd - When family, culture, or fear pressures you, remember John's courage came from fearing God first.
- Guard your words carefully - Herod's careless promise reminds us that our words shape our hearts & relationships.
- Deal with small compromises early - A small bitterness, grudge, or habit can "ferment" into something destructive.

15

Practical Applications

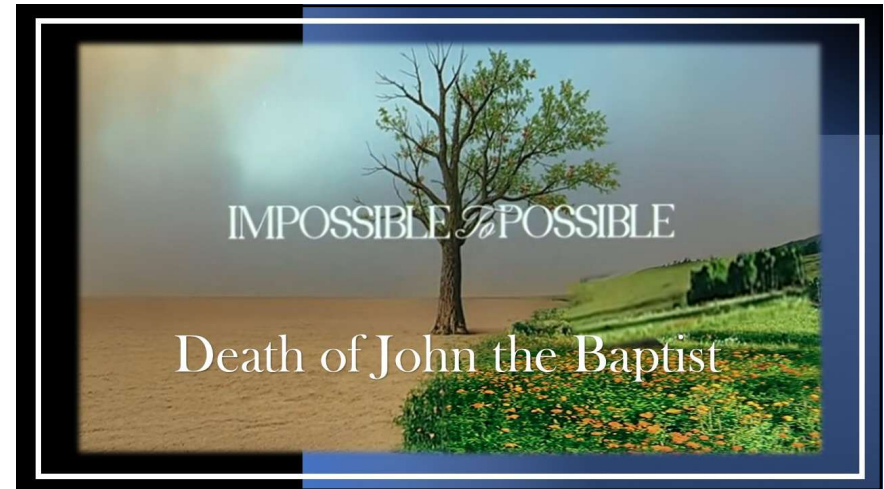
- Bring your pain honestly to Jesus - Whether it's grief, loneliness, or physical suffering, He understands & walks with you.
- Stay spiritually awake - Don't drift into quiet resignation; keep expecting God to work in your life.
- Remember that God finishes what He starts - Even when prayers seem unanswered, He is shaping you into Jesus' image.

16

Discussion Questions

- Where do you see John's courage in your own life story?
- What "small compromises" have you seen become big problems over the years?
- How have you experienced the fear of people more than the fear of God?
- When has God felt silent & how did you respond?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus understands your pain?

17



18