

Matthew 14:12-13 News of the Death of John the Baptist

Introduction: There is a note of sadness about the news of the death of any man. But I am glad that in the same cases, it gives me an opportunity to preach the good news of the gospel.

I. The news as received by the disciples of John.

A. The disciples experienced great sorrow.

1. There was sorrow in spite of the fact that such news had been long expected.
2. They had learned to love John much like one may learn to love his pastor. (They had been saved under his preaching; had been baptized by him; had grown under his teaching.)
3. They had respected him for living a godly life and for his boldness in speaking out against sin.

B. The news prompted an act of heroism on their part.

1. They went and recovered his headless body and buried it.
2. They knew that they were endangering their own lives.
3. They did it anyway. (Like Esther they took the attitude, "If we perish, we perish.")

C. The news prompted an act of wisdom on their part.

1. It was wise to tell Him of their sorrows, because He was able to help them. (He would join them in their sorrows and give them support and strength.)
2. It was wise because He too would be in danger from Herod and He could take precautionary action.

II. The news as received by Jesus.

A. Even Jesus was grieved at the news.

1. He gave evidence of His sorrow by stopping what He was doing, taking His disciples and going away to a lonely spot.
2. He would have been grieved at the death of any man, and especially one of His own. (He wept at the news of the death of Lazarus.)
3. He would have been grieved at any kind of sorrow among His people.
4. He had extra reason to be grieved because John was a close relative. (first cousin)
5. John was also His co-worker in the ministry and a special messenger to prepare the way for his own ministry. (Baptized Him and introduced Him as Messiah.)

B. His grief was reason enough to withdraw, but there were other benefits.

1. It would get Him out of Herod's territory and thus provide safety for Himself and His disciples.
2. It would give Him a chance to be alone with His disciples to prepare them for His own death.
3. It would give them a brief, but much needed chance to rest.

III. The news as received by us today

A. It arouses admiration for this man who was willing to lay down his life for Jesus.

B. It reminds us anew that it is only fitting that we should suffer and, if need be, die for Jesus for He died for us.

C. It reminds us of our own sorrows and our privilege of carrying our troubles to Jesus.

D. It reminds us that one who suffers for Jesus is not to be pitied, Romans 8:18; 1 Peter 1:6-7.

E. It reminds us that we are all going to die. (What is important is that we be saved.)

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved?
2. Are you serving the Lord?
3. Are you carrying your burdens to Him?

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