



May 16, 2021

“Losing Your Head over a Grudge”

Mark 6:14-29

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Too often people find themselves harboring bitterness or resentment for an offense committed against them (either real or perceived). Holding a grudge can be personally destructive. God encourages us to forgive *“as the Lord has forgiven you”* (Colossians 3:13). That’s not always easy, but it is vitally necessary so that bitterness and resentment don’t take us captive. In Mark 6, there is a story about a woman named Herodias who held a grudge so deeply that it ultimately led to the execution of John the Baptist, and it was all because she wanted revenge. In this message Pastor Gary teaches about the destructive nature of bitterness and how we can be free by God’s grace through forgiveness.

1. Pastor Gary said, “[At this time], Jesus was gaining popularity among people by virtue of all of the different miracles [he had done] and his teachings, such that people [were] beginning to wonder, ‘Who exactly is this guy?’ ... Among some of the popular ideas and thoughts of the day, some thought that he was Elijah the prophet back from the dead [or Jeremiah or some other prophet of old]. Herod himself [thought] that [Jesus] might be John the Baptist back from the dead. The reason that Herod [thought] that is because Herod had something to do with, everything to do with, the death of John the Baptist! So, this was haunting him.”
 - a. **Mark 6:14-16** – *“Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, ‘John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’ Others said, ‘It is Elijah.’ And others said, ‘It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.’ But when Herod heard, he said, ‘This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!’ ”*

2. Herod the Great

- a. Herod was a king or territorial monarch who was appointed by the Roman government to oversee Judea.
- b. Herod was the liaison between the Jewish people and the Roman government.
- c. Herod, when the wise men came to see Jesus, gave the edict to kill all baby boys two years old and younger.
- d. Herod had several wives and sons killed because he feared they would become a threat to his reign.
- e. Herod was the one who is credited with being the greatest builder in Israel's history, and his motive was to ingratiate himself to the Jewish people.
 - i. He built Caesarea by the Mediterranean Sea.
 - ii. He built Masada, a fortress in the middle of the desert, in the area of the Dead Sea.
 - iii. He rebuilt and refurbished the temple in Jerusalem.
- f. Herod died circa 4 BC.
- g. Herod the Great's family tree
 - i. Aristobulus IV was a son by Herod the Great's second wife.
 1. Aristobulus had a daughter named Herodias.
 - ii. Herod Philip was a son by Herod the Great's third wife.
 1. Herodias married her uncle, Herod Philip.
 - iii. Herod Antipas was a son by Herod the Great's fourth wife.
 1. Herod Antipas is the Herod referred to in Mark 6.
 2. Herod Antipas seduced Herodias away from Herod Philip and they were married.

3. John the Baptist

- a. John confronted the immorality of Herodias and Herod Antipas.
- b. Herodias was deeply angered by John's intrusion into her life of adultery.
- c. Herodias wanted to kill John, but John was protected by Herod because he wanted to maintain a good relationship with the Jews and the Roman government.

4. Herod's Party

- a. **Mark 6:21-28** - *"Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, 'Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.' He also swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.' So she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist!' Immediately*

she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother."

5. Herodias' grudge against John the Baptist

- a. **Mark 6:19–20a** - *"Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing he was a just and holy man, and he protected him."*
 - i. **Mark 6:19** - *"So Herodias **nursed a grudge** against John and wanted to kill him."* (NIV 1984) (Emphasis added)
 - ii. **Mark 6:19–20a** - *"And Herodias **had a grudge** against him and wanted to put him to death."* (ESV) (Emphasis added)
- b. Pastor Gary said, "[Herodias] held in resentment until she owned it, she possessed it, but what ended up [happening was] that it owned her. And that's what happens when we hold a grudge; it ends up owning us."
- c. Holding a grudge means that you harbor feelings of bitterness, anger or resentment toward another person.

6. When you hold a grudge, it dominates

- a. Herodias was dominated by bitterness and it consumed her, and it ruled her.
- b. Pastor Gary said, "She was coddling it and taking it in, and tucking it away in her heart; she was rehearsing it over and over. [To] nurse a grudge is to rehearse a grudge. ... [She rehearsed it to the point that the only thing that would satisfy the evil in her heart would be when something bad happened to John the Baptist.] ... John the Baptist hadn't done anything terrible at all. ... He was just being faithful to God to tell [Herodias and Herod] the truth. ... This represents the power of resentment. If we don't dominate it; it will dominate us."

7. When you hold a grudge, it deprives

- a. Pastor Gary said, "Herodias [forfeited] half of [Herod's] kingdom for her daughter in order to feed the appetite of her own revenge. How many people are held back from wonderful things in life because they traded the good life for a miserable life of bitterness and resentment? ... Sadly, you might be one of those people who have squandered their lives living under the bondage of

bitterness. [You] can spot a person who is bitter but usually the person who is bitter can't see it in themselves. It has so dominated their thinking and dominated their life that it has become almost part of their persona. They alienate everyone else around them because who wants to be around a bitter person? But they can't understand why no one wants to be their friend because they can't see bitterness in themselves. ... What are you depriving yourself of because of a grudge?"

- b. **Job 21:25** - *"Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, never having eaten with pleasure."*

8. When you hold a grudge, it defiles

- a. Pastor Gary said, "[Holding] a grudge is like drinking from a bitter well and then passing the cup around for everyone else to drink from. [It] not only poisons you, but it poisons everyone else you come into contact with. ... You don't even have to act on the resentment or the bitterness that you have in your thoughts. ... I can't tell you how many times I've seen this scenario. Someone is hurt, offended, wounded because of what someone else has done or their perceived thought of what someone else has done... Then they start talking about it with other people. ... Then they poison everyone else that they talk to. ... What sometimes happens by the grace of God is the person who was offended forgives the offender. But let me tell you what happens. The people who they poisoned along the way are still bitter. They have [taken up] the offense toward that person, and now all of [the other people that were brought into the matter are now bitter toward the person that they have since forgiven!] But now it's too late because [these people] are now embittered. It defiles people!"
- b. **Hebrews 12:15** - *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."* (NIV 1984)
 - i. Pastor Gary said, "What does it mean when it says, *"that no one misses the grace of God"*? ... When someone has wronged you or offended you and you handle it in the right way, which means that you forgive [the person]... people will see when you work through it, and they ask you, 'How did you manage to work through that?' You can say honestly and legitimately, 'by the grace of God.' ... Let me tell you what happens when you don't handle it the right way. You harbor resentment, bitterness; you hold a grudge. It begins to dominate you; it deprives you of the best of life; it defiles you; and now you are missing the grace of God because you are not extending forgiveness in the same way that you were forgiven and, therefore, you are bound by it now.
- c. **Jonah 2:8** - *"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."* (NIV 1984)

- i. An idol can be something that dominates your soul because you are more consumed with it than with the Lord.

9. When you hold a grudge, it devastates

- a. Pastor Gary said, “I wonder how devastating it was for Herodias’ daughter, who is thought to be a teenager at this time, to get the chopped off, human head of a man on a platter. I want you to think about that for just a minute. It’s easy for us to read stories in the Bible and disassociate ourselves from the human emotion, [thinking to ourselves, ‘Well, that was such a long time ago, and they handled trauma differently than we do today.’ This is a real story] about a mom who used her daughter to get revenge because of a grudge, and that grudge was so potent that the mom had no problem traumatizing her daughter in the process to fulfill her own desire for revenge. ... [I don’t care what century you are living in, when someone hands you a human head on a platter, you are going to have nightmares for the rest of your life!] ... [Herodias’ grudge also cost John the Baptist his life.]”
 - i. [Mark 6:27-28](#) - *“Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.”*

10. What should we do?

- a. [Leviticus 19:18](#) - *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”* (NIV 1984)
- b. [Ephesians 4:31](#) - *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”* (NIV 1984)
- c. Simply put, be a person who extends forgiveness!
- d. Pastor Gary said, “God calls us to forgive in order to release the grip of a grudge. Now listen, this is where some people have a problem with forgiveness. [They think that if they forgive that means they condone what the other person did.] No, it doesn’t. Forgiveness does not condone the behavior of another person, whether [what they did] was intentional or unintentional, whether it was real or perceived; forgiveness [doesn’t mean that you are denying the pain associated with the other person’s words or actions]. Here’s what forgiveness does mean: it means that you will no longer be defined by it. ...
- e. [Colossians 3:13](#) - *“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**”* (NIV 1984) (Emphasis added)
- f. Sometimes forgiveness is a process and not a one-time thing.

- g. “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness. ... Forgiveness is letting go of a bell rope. If you have ever seen a country church with a bell in the steeple, you will remember that to get the bell ringing you have to tug awhile. Once it has begun to ring, you merely maintain the momentum. As long as you keep pulling, the bell keeps ringing. Forgiveness is letting go of the rope. It is just that simple. But when you do so, the bell keeps ringing. Momentum is still at work. However, if you keep your hands off the rope, the bell will begin to slow and eventually stop.”
- Corrie ten Boom ¹

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Mark 6:14-29](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide a brief overview of John the Baptist, Herod and his lavish party, and Herodias. (See #1 through #4 above)
3. Allow an opportunity for the people in your group to share their personal experiences about each of the four outline points in Pastor Gary’s message when it comes to grudges: dominating, depriving, defiling, and devastating.
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments about the hold grudges have on those who own them. (See #5 above)
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the way a grudge can dominate a person. (See #6 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the way a grudge can deprive a person. (See #7 above)
7. Read and discuss [Job 21:25](#).
8. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the way a grudge can defile a person. (See #8a above)
9. Read and discuss [Hebrews 12:15](#) and [Jonah 2:8](#). (See #8b and #8c above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the way a grudge can devastate a person. (See #9a above)

¹ <https://www.quoteschristian.com/corrie-ten-boom-quotes.html>

11. Spend time reading and discussing [Leviticus 19:18](#), [Ephesians 4:31](#), and [Colossians 3:13](#). (See #10a, #10b, and #10e above)
 12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about forgiveness. (See #10d and #10g above)
 13. Read and discuss the Corrie ten Boom quote Pastor Gary shared. (See #10g above)
 14. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.
- * Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)