

Devotional

Matthew 5:10

November 7, 2021

Monday

Read Matthew 14:1-12

John was arrested by the ruler Herod and imprisoned because John had denounced Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, as being against the laws of Jewish Scripture (our Old Testament). Herod was also afraid that John would lead a holy rebellion against him. John was arrested and executed not because he had sinned or committed a crime, but because he ran afoul of political authority and that authority felt morally and politically threatened. John called into question Herod's integrity in ways Herod thought imperiled his legitimacy. No matter that John's charges appear perfectly true. He was persecuted and martyred for upholding righteousness and running contrary to the needs of political power.

We are in danger of using whatever power we have and lording it over those with less power every day. It is often so much easier and quicker for us to pull a power play and get what we want than to actually listen to others, treat them well, and practice the righteousness of Jesus.

What situations are you facing these days where you are tempted to use your power to get your way instead of seeking after Jesus' righteousness to do what is right in those situations?

Tuesday

Read Mark 2:23-3:6

The religious powers detested Jesus because who he was and what he taught threatened their position and power. One area we see this is in their condemnation of Jesus' teaching and healing on the Sabbath. The religious authorities condemned Jesus for healing the sick on the Sabbath because it was contrary to their understanding of God's laws. Jesus believes that it is right to do God's work every day of the week. He teaches that the Sabbath (a day of rest) was

created for people, not people for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). And he questioned his opponents asking, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). The religious authorities could not give an answer, but they hated him all the more for undercutting the authority they had built up amongst the people and immediately plotted to destroy him. Jesus' teachings and works of compassion on the Sabbath were a key reason the religious authorities wanted him executed. He was teaching and living the ways of God and throughout history the righteous have been persecuted by the powerful.

Why do the life and teachings of Jesus continue to remain controversial to people with power and authority? What about his life and teachings continue to challenge you?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 5:38-42

Jesus teaches us not to return violence (physical, verbal, relational, etc.) for violence but to be intentionally nonviolent and to offer what is demanded of us and more. Offer the other cheek, be generous with the litigious, walk the extra mile, and give what you have freely. Why? Because if you believe the teachings of Jesus in the Beatitudes and live them, you know that you are deeply loved by God and will never be out of his everlasting care. The pain and hurt of suffering the violence of another will soon disappear and be replaced by the loving care of Jesus.

Pray today for all those who suffer violence. Pray that they would be put in situations of peacefulness and know the love of God.

Friday

For Sunday worship, please read and reflect on Matthew 5:1-12 as we wrap up our series on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.