



## Grain

“At some point (and probably at many points) in our lives, we will be the victim of someone’s greed or ego. There is virtually no escaping it. There will also be points in life when our egos will be tempted.” – Rev. Stavros Akrotirianakis

## Field

<sup>22</sup>When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.” <sup>23</sup>And he solemnly swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” <sup>24</sup>She went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” She replied, “The head of John the baptizer.” <sup>25</sup>Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” <sup>26</sup>The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup>Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, <sup>28</sup>brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup>When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb. Mark 6:22-29

## Thoughts by Reverend James Lynch, Town of Dunn, WI

When is a king not a king? When he’s a tetrarch? OK. Enough of the religious history trivia.

Herod Antipas, one of the surviving sons of Herod the Great, a madman who killed even another of his own sons to keep power, is nothing like his father. He’s nothing like a king, either. He has to keep proving – at least to himself – that he is worthy of the “throne” upon which he sits, the “crown” that rests on his head, the “scepter” he grips so tightly it might break. Everyone who is anyone knows that Herod holds those symbols of office at the pleasure of the Roman governor. Without the backing of the oppressors of his land, he would be on the far outside looking in. At the same time, everyone who is anyone benefits from having at the top a weak-willed coward who wants the trappings of power, wants to be hailed as a great leader and wise ruler without understanding the first thing about what real power looks like, having any idea at all what real wisdom and greatness means.

Sycophancy and empty flattery are the orders of the day. That would get the people around Herod what they wanted, or so they supposed. To that end, they didn’t see that it helped them at all to point out Herod’s shortcomings, including his barely passing acquaintance with the truth. If he were replaced with someone who was surer of himself and his place in the world, who didn’t need to be flattered every minute of every day, the people around Herod might lose their connections to power, to the ability to influence whatever ideas he had and decisions he might make, no matter how ill-advised.

There was a massive accountability gap in Herod’s court that mirrors certain circles in our country today. No one was willing – for their own selfish reasons – to call him to account. No matter what he said – truthful or not. No matter what he did. No matter whom he hurt. Herod got his way because no one – except John the Baptist and we can see how that ended – held him accountable.

We need accountability more than ever today. We need someone(s) to stand up or continue standing up and speaking out when they know something is wrong, is harmful, is detrimental to the fabric of our society. We need more John the Baptists and fewer sycophants. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,  
Pastor Jim