



Grain

“Choose your leaders with wisdom and forethought. To be led by a coward is to be controlled by all that the coward fears... To be led by a liar is to ask to be told lies. To be led by a tyrant is to sell yourself and those love into slavery.”

– Octavia E. Butler

Submitted by Rev. Jean DeVoll-Donaldson, Appleton

Field

“14 King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." 17 For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. 18 For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him...24 She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer.””

Mark 6:14-20 & 24

Thoughts

Did King Herod hear the echo of a ghost emerging from deep within his conscience? Did the prophet he enjoyed listening to before taking his head, return to haunt him? When Herod “heard of it,” that is, the ministry spreading in Jesus’ name, it sounded like the work of John the Baptist. Who else could have that kind of influence? The king didn’t question John’s capacity but hadn’t grasped how the power that John revealed wasn’t confined to any one follower of Christ. The power of God through Jesus was already loose in the world and didn’t resemble the narrow, fear-based control of Herod, who lived only in a shadow of reality. What could Herod have learned from his ghost about real power?

Do you have any ghosts? Maybe internally, you keep experiencing the return of someone you did harm to, or of a lost opportunity, or a belief that you can’t be forgiven. We have all been haunted by something, and hopefully it has given us an opportunity to find resolution or to let go of unnecessary complexes.

What about ghosts created by Herodian-like systems of the present and past? Apparitions can float out of human consciousness through time, from Indian burial grounds and fields where slaves labored, warning us that some injustices haven’t been reconciled. What we haven’t faced is being acted out in the present via public policies and rhetoric that protect privilege. When do we feed into those historical systems out of fear? When do we tap into a more ancient power still loose in the world and moving us toward peace? We need the power of God’s grace, and it is with us. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly Recommended

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy