

## SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**Luke 23:6-12****NO SHOW FOR HEROD, NO SHOW FOR JESUS**

*When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.*

*Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.*

*That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.*

There's something disappointing about the words "No Show." Someone doesn't show up for a motel reservation, or for the wedding celebration, or for work. A bit of a disappointment. Or if one goes to see a play or a movie but at the last minute learns that there is No Show—canceled-- it is a bit of a disappointment. No Show is in this text too.

We heard in the Passion reading on Sunday, that early Friday morning after the night "trial" (so called) of Jesus, the Jewish high priest, scribes, and elders took Jesus to Pontius Pilate for a crucifixion order. Quickly Pilate figured out it was all a matter of envy in the hearts of the Jewish leaders, that Jesus was not guilty of anything worthy of death. He wanted to set Jesus free, but he faced a little too much "heat" for his liking. Pilate did not want to stand up for truth because he was afraid of the result. He looked for an out. He heard that Jesus was from Galilee. Galilee—that was the northern Jewish district where Jesus had grown up and spent much time. Nazareth, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee were all in this northern district. Pilate was ruling over the southern district, Judea. It was in Judea that Bethlehem, Bethany, Jericho, and Jerusalem with the Temple and the offices of the high Jewish officials were located. It seemed made to order. An out! Pilate found it easier to pass Jesus on to Herod, rather than to get to the nitty-gritty of the truth and take appropriate action.

Does that ever happen to you? Pass it on to someone else. I remember working at a mobile-home factory, where the attitude sometimes was—can't fix that now—push it down the line—let somebody else deal with it. Or Jack R. is too much of a problem at school, so just pass him to the next grade and let them deal with him. Have you ever gotten the run-around on the phone when calling for help or an explanation concerning a product or a bill? Dodging responsibility never helps in the long run. It's wrong. Pilate dodged His responsibility.

A little about Herod. The "Herod" name was a family name. There are various King Herods in the New Testament—all from the same family. This one was Herod Antipas. His father was Herod the Great who had ruled all of the land of the Jews under the Romans. Herod the Great was the one who met with the Wise Men, and then had all the baby boys at Bethlehem, two and under, executed when God sent the Wise Men home by a different route. Joseph and Mary and Jesus were safely on their way to Egypt as God directed Joseph. The son, Herod Antipas, the Herod of our text, was the one who had arrested John the Baptist and gave the execution order to have John beheaded at the instigation of his unlawful wife Herodias. The Herods were actually not Jewish by blood line at all, but were Idumeans or Edomites, distant relatives of the Israelites. The Herods were very familiar with Jewish worship of the Lord. Herod Antipas was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival.

Herod was glad to see Jesus. Sometime earlier when he had first heard of Jesus, he thought He must be John the Baptist risen from the dead. Herod had heard much about Jesus—perhaps what a great speaker He was. Perhaps how Jesus could strikingly put the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, in their places. He definitely wanted to see a miracle of Jesus. "Seeing Jesus" was on his "bucket-list," if you will. He was glad to see Jesus, but for the wrong reason. He wanted a show, not words of truth. I wonder how Herod would have responded if Jesus had pointed out Herod's sins, as John had done? It doesn't sit well to be reprimanded by someone else (maybe even the pastor).

At any rate, your relationship with Jesus is in trouble if it's only about getting a good show, if it's only about "cheering" for Him. Likewise your witness about Jesus to others is more than just getting them to cheer for God. Rather, lead them to see that the Father's mercy in Jesus wipes away all the stain of their sins. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10).

Herod prodded Jesus with questions, like trying to get information out of a clammed up criminal. Why did Jesus not answer? Herod's only interest was in getting a good show. This is the same Herod who liked to listen to his prisoner John the Baptism, but would later give the execution order also. Herod was not really interested in spiritual truth. He followed the Jewish faith, but all to his own physical advantage. Jesus would have gladly spoken to Him about spiritual matters. Jesus wanted to save Herod Antipas' soul too. Jesus was about to die for Herod's sins too. Jesus did speak with Pilate, didn't He? When Pilate asked if Jesus were the King of the Jews, Jesus answered, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about Me?" Jesus wanted to reach Pilate's heart. Same here with Herod. But Herod just wanted a show and got No Show from Jesus in words, or in miracles or in anything.

Even the accusations of the chief priests and scribes who had accompanied Him like wolves on the trail couldn't render a word out of Jesus. They were accusing him "vehemently"—the Greek word meaning "fully stretched out." "Vehemently," like a ship's sail stretched fully tight by hefty wind, or like a bow that's been drawn and waiting to deliver a mighty arrow. None of their emotion evoked any word from Jesus. Perhaps it amused Herod a little, to see their envy, to hear them say things he was sure were lies, to see their hatred. No response from Jesus. Not even, "Liars! You're all liars! All lies!" which you or I would be apt to do. Jesus did not try to converse or compete with those who made their own rules of fair and foul. No Show.

Because Herod didn't get a Show, he made his own Show. His obedient soldiers treated Jesus like dirt, or actually the word means treated him like a zero. Made him nothing. They mocked Him. They made sport of Him. They treated Him like a child. Indeed, "He was wounded--outside and inside--for our transgression; He was bruised--outside and inside--for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Such a Savior! He silently suffered, as a lamb silent before the shearers. He silently took all the scorn that Herod and His men of war could dish out. All for you, so that the Father in heaven does not treat you as your disobedience and sculduggery deserve—as your underhanded and unscrupulous behaviors merit. Thank you Jesus. Please continue to forgive us.

Herod added to the Show. He had his soldiers put a gorgeous, a "bright," robe on Jesus, Was it yellow, blaze orange, or white? Pilate's soldiers would later put a purple, a scarlet, robe on Him. This one seems to be different, "bright," not necessarily something royal, but eye-catching, for the Show, you know.

Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. Surely somewhat disappointed, but somewhat satisfied that he was able to give Jesus a little taste of Herod's medicine. Do you send Jesus away, if He does not grant you your outward wish? Please don't.

On that day Herod and Pilate became friends. In their mutual dealings, or shall we say mutual lack of virtue, against Jesus, they found friendship. I am reminded of when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We had a new teacher in our Lutheran school. There were two boys Mark and Jerry, both a little bit of troublemakers, who shared an uncanny friendship. After a few weeks the teacher asked if they were related. They laughed, No. Her response was—"Just the devil in both of you." No laughter. That's Herod and Pilate. Neither one stood for truth or justice, and that united them.

There was really another No Show here. It wasn't Jesus. It was Herod! Herod's heart was closed to the Savior's love and salvation. Herod resisted Jesus, and could only mock and ridicule Him. The one thing Jesus wanted for Herod—or for Pilate, or for you, or for me—is to win our hearts with His love. Herod closed his heart to the rescue from sin in Christ. He did not want a Savior. No doubt Jesus wept on the inside.

As you leave this house tonight, did you get a Show? Salvation through Jesus is not smooth words or entertainment, as it can often become. It is about a refuge for the guilty, a refuge in the crucified Savior who rose in victory. It's an inner peace that passes understanding. There is your Show! And as you leave this house, may the faith in your hearts bear the fruit that comes from Jesus' Word, may it be the harvest, the Show, that Jesus brings to you and seeks in you.

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---