

**Malicious Murder and Compassionate Concern**

1. From our recent studies in Matthew (chapters 8-13), what “news” would Herod have heard about Jesus? Who did Herod think Jesus was, and why did he think that (1-2)? From what Herod said, how do you think all this made him feel?
2. Which of the Ten Commandments was Herod violating here (see Exodus 20:3-17)? Additionally, what specific OT law was he breaking with Herodias (see Leviticus 18:16; 20:21)? Do you think John should have spoken out about these things as he did (3-4), or should he have just kept quiet? Give the pros and cons you see for each option.
3. In what ways did Herodias’ actions and desires influence her daughter (3-11)? What does this teach us about how our lives influence our children and grandchildren?
4. How were Herod’s actions based on worry about what others would think (5, 8-10)? Whose opinion should he have thought about instead (see Proverbs 29:25)?
5. Think back to the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus had given in chapters 5-7. What might Herod have done differently if he had taken to heart the things Jesus said in chapter 5, verses 21, 27-28, 31-32, and 33-37?
6. Why did Jesus go away from the crowds with His disciples by taking a boat across the Sea of Galilee (13; see Mark 6:30-32)? How might you have responded to the situation Jesus then faced (14)? How did Jesus respond – what did He see and feel when He saw the crowd (see 9:36; Mark 6:34)? And what did He do for them that day (14)?
7. What did Jesus challenge His disciples to give to the hungry crowds (16)? In what ways does He then use them to accomplish a miracle (17-20)? How do you see Jesus training His disciples through this experience? What can you learn from this?
8. Why do you think Jesus made extra bread, so that there were leftovers (20)? What is significant about the number of baskets of leftovers? Do you see a lesson for us here?
9. The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle Jesus did (before His resurrection) that is recorded in all four gospels (see Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:1-14). While these accounts each tell us some different details, why do you think this miracle is given such an important place in all the gospels about Jesus? What does this miracle teach you?