



Sermon Notes: “Going First”

Matthew 14:1–12

9.13.26

SIGN & SURRENDER

- A sign reveals a Biblical truth.
- Surrender is what that revelation requires of you.

SIGN #1

Sign

- **Herod:** A man can be that close to the truth and never capture it.

Surrender

- Admiring the truth is not the same as obeying it.
- Regret is not repentance.

SIGN #2

Sign

- **John:** His death is the shadow the cross casts backward
 - If you total John’s life on paper, it does not look like a win, yet there was “*none greater*”.

Surrender

- Stop needing the outcome to prove that obedience was worth it.
- Nothing you have given up for Jesus has ever been wasted.

So What?

Maybe you are supposed to be the first one.

There is nowhere He is asking you to go that He has not already been.

For Study, Reflection, Discussion During the Week:

Life Group ICEBREAKER: The sermon opened with a rope swing — everybody standing there, nobody wanting to go first because you don't know how cold, how deep, or whether the rope will hold. But once somebody jumps, everyone goes. Think about a time you were the first one — into something hard, scary, or unknown. What made you go? And what happened after you did?

REVIEW: Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? What was it and why did it resonate with you?

READ: Matthew 14:1-5 | Mark 6:20 | 2 Corinthians 7:10

- Mark 6:20 tells us Herod knew John was righteous, protected him, was disturbed and kept coming back for more. The sermon said Herod was a fan — he enjoyed being convicted and never once intended to change. Kierkegaard called that the difference between an admirer and a follower. Where in your own life has admiring the truth been easier than obeying it? What specific thing do you know you're supposed to do that you've been sitting with instead of acting on?
 - 2 Corinthians 7:10 draws the line between two kinds of sorrow: one that turns you around, and one that just makes you sad on the way to the same decision. The sermon traced it through Pilate, Judas, and Peter — same feeling, three different destinations. The difference wasn't how bad they felt; it was which direction they walked. Is there something in your life you keep feeling bad about and keep doing? What direction are you walking?
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READ: Matthew 14:6-12 | Matthew 11:11 | Hebrews 11:13, 39

- Darin spoke directly to people who already paid the cost: the job lost for telling the truth, the friendship ended for standing for something, the prayers prayed for thirty years with nothing visible to show. The word for those people was: nothing you have given up for Jesus has ever been wasted. John didn't see Easter. He didn't see the church. He died in a cell not fully sure — and it was all true anyway. For the person in your group carrying that kind of weight — what do they most need to hear from the rest of you tonight?
 - 1 Corinthians 6:11 says "some of you were once like that" — past tense, on purpose — "but you were washed, made holy, made right with God by calling on the name of Jesus." The sermon said your origin story is where you started; it is not who you are. Is there a file you're carrying on yourself that's years old and hasn't been updated? Where are you using your own story to disqualify yourself the same way Nazareth used Jesus' story to disqualify Him?
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DEPLOY:

- **Name the Room.** Identify the specific people — the guest list — whose opinion is currently keeping you from obeying something you already know you're supposed to do. Write their names down. Then ask honestly: are they worth more authority over your life than God? Share it with one person in your group this week. You don't have to have it figured out — just stop carrying it alone.
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Don't Forget:

- Join us in praying for the students that will be participating in 'See You At The Pole' on September 23rd
 - Think about joining a Life Group! Take a look at the sign-up sheets on the Welcome Desk or fill out a connection card and we can help get you connected with a group.
 - Ladies, this Saturday, September 19th, is Coffee Connection! From 9am-10:30am join other women in a time of learning and fellowship
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Prayer:

Father, we confess we've been admirers when You've been asking for followers. We've said amen in all the right places and called that surrender. We've felt the conviction and enjoyed the sermon and walked out unchanged — just like Herod. Forgive us. And we name the rooms that have been running our lives — the guest lists, the reputations, the people we can't disappoint. Help us stop letting them have more authority than You. For those in this room who have already paid a cost nobody sees — remind them tonight that John didn't see Easter and it was all true anyway. Nothing they gave up for You has been wasted. Not one prayer. Not one hard year. Not one quiet act of obedience in a small town at the end of a road. And for anyone being called to go first — remind them they aren't really first. Jesus already went. There is nowhere You're asking them to go that You haven't already been. Give them the courage to jump. In Jesus' name, Amen.