

# K.O.'d by Sin

Slide -

I once watched an interview with Mohammed Ali, the boxer, while he was the heavyweight champion of the world.

Slide - And he was explaining in this interview how he knocked people out, if you know anything about boxing, he wasn't what's called a power puncher.

He wasn't one of those guys with one punch, he could take you out.

He wasn't that kind of a fighter, and yet, he knocked out a lot of people, and he explained his method of knocking people out.

He said, it wasn't only one big punch, but rather, a series of blows that usually brought his opponents down.

He explained that a rapid combination of blows caused a kind of a short circuit in the brain.

In other words, the brain couldn't process all of that information, and for a moment, the person would lose consciousness, and that's how he scored a lot of his knockout victory.

He was a very fast puncher.

Slide - Also interesting that we note that Ali, who knocked so many people out, and was never really hurt himself was struck by Parkinson's Disease, which causes the same kind of short circuit to the brain, and eventually, led to his death in 2016, at the age of 74.

I remember his knockout example because it explains perfectly how a person is knocked out by sin, there's a similarity here.

It is rarely only one sin that makes us fall. Rarely just one sin that hooks us into a bad habit.

No, it's usually a combination of things that brings us to the point where we fall, and sometimes, we don't ever get back up again.

So today, I want to look at a man who is KO'ed by sin, and hopefully, learn a strategy, if we wish, to defend ourselves against this happening to us.

## Herod's KO

Slide - Matthew 2:16 "Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men."

This man, Herod, was Herod the Great, the King who received the magi when Jesus was born

But then ordered all of the children under two years of age to be killed, hoping to get rid of Jesus and he did this to protect his throne, this Herod right here, that we're talking about in Matthew.

There's another Herod we're going to talk about in a moment, so I don't want to get you confused, but I want to talk about his lineage here.

This Herod right here in Matthew, Herod the Great, also killed some of his wives, some of his own children, in order to protect his throne.

And he left some of his sons to reign after him.

Now one of these, Herod Antipas, reigned during Jesus' ministry.

He thought that Jesus was the reincarnated John the Baptist, who was coming back to haunt him for having executed him unjustly,

and so with this background, we see blow number one that Herod sustained in his KO by sin.

**Slide - Blow #1 - Poor example and lack of teaching in righteousness by his parents**

Herod had rotten parents, and this was his first blow that struck him in his KO by sin.

We know that children have their own character.

There was a time in America where popular child psychology taught that when a child is born, you have a blank slate.

You have, it's a blank piece of paper.

Whatever you write on it, that's it.

Well, you know, that was a big thrill for some parents.

Wow, I've got a blank slate, this child, made in my image, I'm going to write perfection on this slate, but as most parents found out from that generation, that was not accurate at all.

But Children are not a blank slate.

They come with their own character, they come with free will, however, we also know that they learn things from all kinds of places and people, especially today.

Back in the day, when I was a kid, you know, we had four TV channels, and you had to get up off the couch and walk over to the TV and change the channel.

You know, I was the first channel changer. My father said, used to say, "Get up and change, put it on 2. "No wait a minute, put it on 4."

So there was danger in those days, but today, wow, the parents today, I mean, forget TV.

The internet, thousands of channels and sources for all kinds of information that is coming into your home, into the mind of your child.

However, in the end, the example in the teaching or lack of teaching from parents will serve as the norm for their own conduct.

Parents of today have responsibility to monitor the internet, just like our parents had the responsibility to monitor those four channels, if they didn't want us to take in some bad things and bad scenes and other things.

We need to remember that parents have a great impact on their children.

I say that, there's a survey that came out about who influences the kids the most.

Very interesting survey.

and this survey among American college students several years ago, tried to measure the most influential person in both young men and young women.

And the researchers expected to find, perhaps, peer groups, movie stars, internet personalities, athletes, who were going to be the biggest influencer on children,

**Slide -** and lo and behold, they discovered that the majority of young adults listed their fathers as the main influence for good or bad.

Imagine that. And that's whether or not the father was there or not. He still was the major influence.

In other words, kids were saying, I want to be just like my dad, or they were saying, the last thing I want to be is like my dad, but it was always the dad.

A heavy burden of responsibility and a big surprise.

And so the first punch, at Herod Junior came from a non-existent mother and an evil and power-hungry father that patterned this behavior for his young mind.

### **Herod and John the Baptist**

**Slide - Mark 6:14-18** "Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

**Slide -** But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

So part of John's preaching consisted of denouncing the marriage of Herod to Herodias.

It was unlawful, he said, unlawful before the Jewish law.

See, Herod, rather, had made a pretense of being partly Jewish so he could ingratiate himself to the Jewish people, and so he kind of theoretically placed himself under the law of Moses.

Now Herod was already married.

Here's the thing, but while he was in Rome on official visit, he abandoned his wife, and he eloped with Herodias and returned to Judah. Mark 6:14-18

Imagine. He's married, his brother's married, he's visiting Rome, he steals his brother's wife, there's no divorce here, he just steals her, takes her, and then he goes back to Judah.

To make matters worse, Herodias was also married and was the wife of Herod's stepbrother, Philip, and was also his step-niece by marriage.

And so in this reckless marriage, we see another blow against Herod,

### **Slide - Blow #2 - Herod was lustful**

The fact that he was abandoning his own wife, stealing his brother's wife, disgracing his family by marrying his own niece,

But that was nothing, to him, because of what counted was the satisfying of his sexual appetite.

He did all of this in public, and he didn't care.

He wanted what he wanted, even if it was sinful, even if it was disgraceful, even if it was against the law.

We know later, that his new wife Herodias will see this weakness in him, and she will use it against him.

This is a great example of how Satan works in our lives.

He always encourages us to cultivate various sins and habits, thinking that we can enjoy them without consequence, but he is always preparing us for the time when he can spring the trap and use these things against us and we'll see how, she used this particular thing against Herod at the right time.

## **Herod and Herodias**

**Slide** - Mark 6:19-20 “Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.”

Herodias wanted to kill John because he was weakening her position at court and with the people.

Herod protected John because he knew who John was.

Herod knew, John, it was true prophet of God, he was a holy man, and of course, killing him would not be popular.

So Herod even enjoyed John's preaching.

It filled him with challenge and mixed emotions.

John's preaching was having an effect on him. His heart was not completely hard. That's the sad part of this story.

### **Herod knew what he needed to do.**

He knew the right thing to do, and that was to release John and to repent of his sins, as John's preaching called everyone to do, and of course, be baptized.

Herod was close to this, but he was perplexed. He was of two minds:

If he pleased Herodias and killed John, the people and his conscience would be against him.

If he responded to the preaching and released John, he would lose Herodias, and the sinful pleasures that he enjoyed but he would have a clear conscience coming out of the waters of baptism at John's hands.

So here we see blow number three that struck Herod:

### **Slide - Blow #3 - Herod was morally weak**

Herod loved the darkness, more than he loved the light.

He saw the light, he knew the right thing to do, but he loved sin too much, and that prevented him from going towards the light.

The number one reason why people refuse the gospel or fall from faith is that they love their sins way too much, they're morally weak.

The reason for this is that they believe a couple false ideas planted in them by Satan:

### **Slide - Lie #1 - The pleasure of sin is just going to last.**

The Bible tells us that pleasure is only for a season and then comes the reckoning, and then comes the judgment (Hebrews 11:25).

### **Slide - Lie #2 - There is no hell. The Bible says that hell is real. It's a place of suffering.**

It's eternal.

Jesus talks more about hell than any other person in the Bible.

People are always saying, oh, there's no hell, Jesus is love. Well, yeah, He is, but He talks about hell a lot.

**Slide** - Mark 9:43-44 “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’”

Herod was caught between right and wrong, and for a time, these were equally balanced before him because he was undecided, he was trying to maintain the status, keep John alive, keep Herodias happy.

And a lot of people do this. They work at balancing right and wrong without making a clear decision either way.

A little bit of God, a little bit of sin, not too much to upset the balance.

Of course, this is a dangerous situation to maintain, because as we will see with Herod, it provides Satan with the opportunity to deliver the knockout punch.

### **Herod and Herodias' Daughter**

**Slide** - Mark 6:21 "Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee"

Mark writes, an opportune day came, and by the way, opportune for who?

Well, for Satan, that's who.

So this was a strategic day for Herodias, the agent of Satan, because she was scheming for a way to get rid of John.

And it was also an important day politically for Herod.

**Slide** - Mark 6:22 "And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

And so Herodias' daughter, this is her daughter with Philip, her former husband, pleases Herod, and there are sexual undertones here in the term pleased.

There's that old lust thing working in Herod once again.

The dance is pagan and sensuous and it's meant to arouse.

Herod, in the excitement caused by the party, the wine, his own lust, makes a foolish promise, foolish because the kingdom was not his to give.

It belonged to the Romans. He was just a manager. He couldn't give anything away.

It was all talk; it was all bragging. And so he makes an oath that he will keep his promise no matter what.

**Slide** - Mark 6:24-25 "So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Herodias completes her plan through her daughter, by making her ask for John's head, and she says, right away, I want it now.

This way, Herod could not put her off or use some delaying tactics in order to save face.

In this scene, we witness the final blow:

### **Slide - Blow #4 - Herod was proud**

**Slide** - Mark 6:26-28 "And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

**Slide** - Mark 6:27-28 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother."

He didn't want to go back on his word, even though his promise was stupid.

### **That's the only word for it, stupid and sinful.**

Because of his pride, and that delicate balance he was trying to maintain, that balance was tipped in favor of sin, and he committed a deadly one.

He murdered God's prophet. I mean, murder is murder, but to murder God's prophet, this is a bad, bad, thing.

The knockout punch moved him from indecision to perdition,

from being a step away from heaven to falling into the pit of hell, and history tells us, he never recovered, never.

### **K.O Replay**

Usually, in boxing matches, they give you a replay, you know, watch it on TV, they give you a replay of the important rounds, and especially the KO punch.

**Slide** - So in our study of Mark here, or this particular passage, we can see how Herod was knocked out by sin:

1. It began with an evil example and a lack of moral or spiritual training by his parents.
2. It continued with a lifetime of pursuing sensual desires or unrestricted lust.
3. There was a key moment when there was indecision about doing the right thing, at the critical point.
4. It finished with a foolish pride that would rather go to hell than admit fault.

I know some people that'd rather burn in hell than change their mind.

And the reason that they'd rather burn in hell than change their mind, they just don't really believe in hell.

They don't really believe that God will punish them, and yet, the Bible is filled with examples of God punishing people because they disobeyed Him.

I don't believe that we equal Herod in the degree of evil in our lives.

All of us have certain sins, certain habits and attitudes that by themselves, may not present a great threat to our faith and so we continue to indulge in them, or we justify or we rationalize them for that reason.

It's not so bad, this habit I've got. It's not such a bad thing, you know?

We don't see the harm or the possible damage of this little sin or this little bad habit or this unchristian attitude.

We don't see how it'll cause any problems.

**Slide** - But combined together by Satan, **the right combination of our little sins at a critical moment can make us fall faster and further from God than we ever imagined**, ever imagined.

How many times do people say, people shouldn't drink and drive?

Yeah, shouldn't do that. shouldn't drink and drive, and people cheat on that a little bit.

Well, I'm just saying, it's just one beer or one glass of wine, I'm just having it with my meal at the restaurant.

And you go for years, ah, just a couple of drinks, just a couple of beers, you know.

And then one night, some guy crosses the street on foot on the red light, shouldn't be there, and you, a glass of wine or two beers after your supper, run that guy over.

And your life is over. Your life, as you knew it, is over. Period. It's a whole other life that you now have.

Were you going too fast? No.

But that little thing that you just, never really nailed down, combined with one moment.

You're just looking down to change the station on the radio, and that guy was crossing the street on the red light.

He had no business being there. Yeah, put those three innocent things together and what do you have?

You have one guy who's dead, and you have another guy whose life is over.

What do you think Jesus is saying when He says to Peter that Satan is like a roaring lion, looking who he can devour?

Satan is always looking for situations that he can put together so that he can destroy somebody.

Summary

The solution or the best defense for us or Herod is always the same.

**Slide - 1. We need to acknowledge sin as sin as soon as we recognize as such in our lives.**

No playing around, no justification, no just this once, no, it's not a big deal.

We need to simply call it for what it is when we see it. I'm sinning.

If you're always lying or fibbing or bending the truth to get your way, sooner or later, that's going to get you into trouble.

**Slide - 2. We need to ask God for help to deal with our sins.**

Too many times, we say, well, I can handle this, or tomorrow, I'll quit, or you know, I'm just going to grow out of it.

One day, it'll all take care of itself. I want to tell you something, brothers and sisters. Sin never takes care of itself.

If you don't take care of it, then Satan will take care of it for you.

The reason Jesus died on the cross is because we couldn't deal with or overcome sin in our lives by ourselves.

We need someone to call on, and that someone is God,

and we need someone to remove our sins, and that person is Jesus.

**Slide - 3. We need to understand that we can be knocked out.**

Mohammed Ali bragged that no one could get him and no one could knock him out and that was true in the ring but then he got Parkinson's Disease.

And then he had to have people lead him around by the hand, terrible thing, that disease.

We need to walk humbly before the Lord, knowing that we're easily vulnerable to sin, and we can be knocked out if we're not careful.

We work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Why?

Well, because it is possible to lose it if we're not careful, that's why.

In this life, we will be knocked around, we will receive blows that will put us down from time to time,

but if: we are honest with ourselves about sin, we rely on God for help and forgiveness,

we are careful with our souls, nurturing them through prayer and worship and study and service,

then we may be knocked down once in a while, but we'll never be knocked out.

**Slide - How is your fight with sin going?**

Are you in a fight with sin? And how is that fight going? Are you winning or are you taking a beating?

Maybe you don't have the protection of Christ's blood to guarantee your victory.

If not, come to the blood of Christ and be baptized in His name in order to receive forgiveness.

Maybe you need to come to your corner.

You know, the fighters that are tired, that bell rings, and they go to their corner and they sit on the stool, and you see the trainer, and the cut guy working on them, squirting water on them, and giving them a pep talk, you can do this.

The guy's been beaten up for nine rounds. There's no way he's going to win, but you hear, when they have the camera in there now, and the microphone, oh, you got this, you got one more round to do it, and you'll be great, it'll be all right, and everybody watching knows that this guy is never going to win.

He just needs encouragement to finish that last round. Maybe you need to come to your corner.

Maybe that's what you need, to come to your corner, get a little encouragement from the prayers of the church,

a Bible study to help you understand how to do the thing you want to do,

how to overcome the sin, that perhaps is crippling you or holding you back.

If so, then come for the prayer of the church and for the restoration.

Whatever blows that you've received, Jesus can guarantee that you'll be standing when the bell rings if you come to Him when you are in trouble, now or in the future.