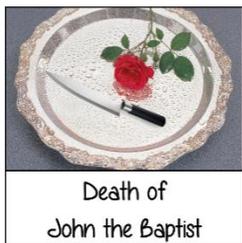


God's Story Our Story



January 31, 2016

Devotion: Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone, as a couple, as a family; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

Great one, you do nothing by halves. You give us an entire kingdom. How silly of us to gather in what we think we need, when you already provide it. Let us hear your word today and know it for truth. Amen.

Reflect: Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb. Mark 6:27-29

Study: Study the reading and consider the background.

Jesus goes home to teach. He is not made welcome. No one believes that a hometown boy could be responsible for the miracles that have been bandied about. And so he and his students leave that place. He sends them out to teach and heal, two by two. He tells them not to get too comfortable anywhere.

Nobody in that region quite knew who they were dealing with. Was it Elijah, returned? Another prophet? Was it John the Baptist, raised from the dead? It was a time of questions.

Read: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text. After the reading, ask the follow-up questions.

Sunday, Mark 6:1-29, *Death of John the Baptist*

Monday, Psalm 122

Tuesday, Mark 8:11-13, *The Demand for a Sign*

Wednesday, Mark 8:14-21, *The Yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod*

Thursday, Mark 8:22-26, *Jesus Cures a Blind Man at Bethsaida*

Friday, Mark 9:9-13, *The Coming of Elijah*

Saturday, Mark 9:14-29, *The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit*

How are Jesus' and John the Baptist's words and actions shaking things up? Who is most offended by their words? Why?

Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions, or simply check in with "Highs" and "Lows."

What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples in twos with little provisions? How might your life look different if you went about your life's mission sparsely equipped?

John was beheaded in part because of a gross imbalance of power between the rulers and those they rule. Where do you see imbalances of power in your community? What can be done to empower those with little power?

Do: By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Do something for Jesus that is outside your comfort zone. Talk to someone about your faith, visit someone you don't know well, attend a protest for something you believe in, run in a race for a cause, or try something else.

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God push you outside your comfort zone for Jesus' sake. Amen.