

How to Protect Yourself From the Seduction of Power

Even as all around the world people are looking for understanding and direction for the days ahead, I want to share a word with you from the Lord to strengthen and encourage you and help you to navigate through these important times.

John the Baptist Inquires of Jesus

As I spent time with the Lord, He led me into the depths of His Word in Matthew 11 and the many things taking place behind the scenes there. He gave me keys of understanding and wisdom for the church in this season.

By the start of Matthew 11, Jesus had given authority to His disciples and sent them into the regions of Israel with the message of His kingdom. John the Baptist, however, was confined in one of Herod's prisons by this time and sent his own disciples to inquire of Jesus whether or not He really was the one Israel had been waiting for.

First, we will look at John's situation and see what had led to all of this.

John's Confinement

John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus Christ, and the greatest among all those born of women according to Jesus' own words (verse 11). He had prepared the way for the Lord and brought a new era of righteousness to Israel, where even the tax collectors were seeking the will of the Lord through him, being baptized and changing the way they lived (Luke 3:12).

John's anointing and influence brought him before rulers including Herod the Tetrarch, ruler of Galilee, whom he spoke

to in the truth of the Lord as a prophetic voice. In this place of influence, however, John became a pawn in someone else's struggle for power.

John had counseled Herod that it was not lawful for him to marry his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. Because of this, Herodias was holding a grudge against John. She knew very well that the alliance she wanted was wrong, but because of the power, influence and wealth that came with it, she was determined not to be hindered.

Knowing that John was a voice of truth and an influence over Herod, Herodias schemed to beautify her daughter Salome in such a way that when she danced for Herod on his birthday, he promised with an oath to give her whatever she wished. She asked for John to be beheaded.

Although Herod knew John was a godly and righteous man and that the request was unjust, he did not want to be embarrassed in front of his guests and granted Salome's wish. He had allowed himself to be seduced into making an ungodly arrest and into silencing the voice of the Lord in his life and nation.

As one who seeks the counsel of the Lord and His prophetic voice, you need to make sure that you are not seduced by the dance of power in this season or baited into doing what is ungodly. The need for power and provision, for influence, for a kingdom and the various agendas that people are so desperate to fulfill have caused many to lose their sense and discernment. For the sake of power or whatever it is that they desire, some have become motivated to ignore or even cut off the true voice of God where it would stop them from having what they want.

In this season, be sure to protect yourself from being involved in the wrong alignments, ungodly entanglements and power struggles out of which these things arise and in which

people become pawns to be used to serve an agenda. Take care not to speak or make demands out of ambition or anger or to sow seeds of destruction with your own mouth. Instead, take care to protect the forerunner anointing and the genuine, authentic prophetic voice of God in your life, and be wise.

Holding to the Truth You Know

Now let us look at John's state of mind in that place, in the dungeon in which he was held. You can just imagine the oppression there. John was someone who had lived in the wide-open lands of the wilderness but was now captured, confined and isolated in a tiny space because he had become a pawn in someone else's game. Herodias had put him into that environment to stop him from speaking the truth. The enemy wanted to use this to intimidate and break him, as witnessing to the truth was John's very identity from the beginning. He had walked with Jesus, and while he was still in his mother's womb, he had a witness of Jesus Christ before He was even born. He had lived a supernatural life, encountered the wonders of God and had seen the Holy Spirit descending physically upon Jesus at His baptism, confirming that He was the one to come. In this place, however, which was so unfamiliar to him, he doubted what he knew and wanted assurance from the Lord, and he sent his disciples with his question.

At this time with all that is going on in the world, many are feeling confined, isolated and intimidated. But be careful not to let anything that is going on around you make you forget the truth. You know the journey on which you have been brought and what the Lord has done for you and through you along the way. You know the circumstances the Lord has brought you out of and the encounters that you have had with Him. There is a *knowing* within yourself by which you know His truth. Even if the place you are in now is not what you are used to or what you expected, there is no need to doubt Him. He hasn't changed and He is still the one in whom you can trust.

Now when Jesus heard John's question, he told John's disciples to "'Go and tell John what you hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them'" (Matt. 11:4-5). This was such a powerful statement. Jesus was letting John know clearly, "I've got this." Jesus was active in every way imaginable, and the promises of God were being fulfilled.

In this time of lockdown, many have asked questions of Jesus. At the same time, however, throughout the body of Christ, there have been miraculous breakthroughs, people have been saved and the creation is thankful for the break it has been given. God's promises are still being fulfilled. Jesus is saying that we should let the signs we see bring hope. He's saying to His church, "I've got this." The circumstances of the world are affecting many, and some are not responding in Christ but from their own points of view, but remember, Jesus has this.

The Lord then goes on to honor John and the part he has played in the advance of the kingdom (Matt. 11:7-15). Let us honor and pray for the forerunners in this season that nothing would cause them to lose their voice or their assurance. The Lord has and will continue to use them mightily to advance His kingdom, and their voices will be heard.

Repentance and Perseverance

Jesus then goes on to talk about Chorazin and Bethsaida and stresses the need for repentance (Matt. 11:20-24). While the world is resetting, we should look at the flickers of hope and draw closer to Him. While what we see happening in the world may be painful, we should still out of gratitude move into repentance, setting ourselves before Him correctly. Go to him and lay down what you are going through, confess your unbelieving and doubt. Do this to align with Him. He is looking for us to arise from these circumstances and do good.

Jesus Himself is our great example. Can you imagine what it would have felt like for Him to have seen people being executed at Calvary, especially knowing that He had to go there too? Our pictures of Calvary focus on Him because of who He is, and we think of only three people being crucified, but in reality, many people were executed there. Seeing and knowing all of this and witnessing this level of death around him would have been heartbreaking for Him. Yet He continued to do good because He knew that the solution to it all was in Him. The Scripture says that “as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17b). We can trust in Him to put His solution in us as we arise to serve Him.

Finding the Strategies in Him

Jesus then begins speaks of how the Father has given His revelation to children but hidden it from the wise and learned (Matt. 11:25). This is such a powerful statement. As His children, there are divine strategies and solutions available to us. If you're called to Him and are one of His, sit with Him and find the strategy you need.

In Psalm 140:7b it says of the Lord that “You have covered my head in the day of battle.” Use this as a prayer to protect your thoughts so that you will not be unnecessarily distracted while you seek Him. Get the full understanding of the strategy from Him, so that you pick your fights wisely. Know what battles you are you fighting, what your spheres of influence and authority are as well as your boundaries. Know that He gives wisdom to His children and build on what he has told you to do in this hour.

It is vital that your strategy really is the one He has given. Take time to check and ask yourself whether your strategy is been met with His miraculous provision or whether you are having to manipulate others to get what you need. If you have become busy building your own kingdom, you will be seduced by the dance of power' but if you are building the Lord's kingdom

on your hands and knees in prayer, fully abandoned to Him, in that place, you will receive the keys for getting everything done. You will also find rest and not strife. Remember that He said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me ... for My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:29-30). Carry His burden, not yours.

Rest and Be Strong

It's all about to happen, and the journey has begun. Nothing will be the same again. Rest a while in Him so you connect with the beauty of the life He has freely given to us. You will be strong to arise when the moment comes. He gives rest to those who labor. In Him we live, move and have our being.
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