

women IN SCRIPTure

EXPLORING ALL THE WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

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Herodias: Are You Her?

by Stephanie Catmull



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The Truth is hard to hear, but hear it anyway. Don't be like Herodias, and behead the words of Truth because it inconveniences your life or because you feel ashamed.

Are you her? Take a quick moment and take stock of your life: your husband,

your boyfriend, your past relationships. Are you divorced for a reason other than marital unfaithfulness? Are you remarried? Or are you married to someone who has been divorced outside of adultery? Are you having an affair? Are you living with someone outside of marriage? Are you in a same-sex partnership?

If you have said yes to any of these, then you are her. You are the person that John the Baptist was talking about when he scolded King Herod for being in an illegal relationship. True, you may not have divorced your husband, only to marry his half-brother so that you could climb his corporate ladder like Herodias, Herod's wife. But if you are sexually impure, then you need to listen.

The voice of Truth did not come in a pretty little package neatly tied up with a velvet ribbon. John the Baptist was a wild man who wore a coat of camel's hair, and ate locusts and honey. He was the loud, exalting voice of Truth of one calling out in the desert. He heralded the King of Kings, and paved the way for everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, to hear the voice of God. And his prerequisite: Repent, and be baptized. And you need to listen and understand WHAT you need to repent, because you cannot begin to walk with God and know His ways unless you do this first.

The Truth is hard to hear, but hear it anyway. Don't be like Herodias, and behead the words of Truth because it inconveniences your life or because you feel ashamed. Don't suppress the Truth because that means you would have to change. Don't ignore the Truth because "everyone else is doing it." Don't be so hedonistic that you live for your own pleasure without morals and scruples, declaring that Truth is relative anyway and doesn't apply to you. Don't be offended when someone tells you that what you are doing is wrong. Don't get angry because you feel God is intolerant. Don't ignore passages in the Bible that you don't agree with, because it goes against your way of life.

John the Baptist was speaking directly to YOU. Are you going to have the same reaction that Herodias did, and dismember the message and the messenger? Let me say before you stop reading, that I too am one of these people, because I, too, have been sexually impure. I divorced my first husband, and not because of adultery. I married my second husband, and caused him also to become an adulterer. Does that mean that we need to get divorced? No. But it does mean that I needed to repent and to seek forgiveness for the things I myself have done.

And I have. I understand what it means to face that gut-wrenching truth about myself, to look in the mirror of Scripture and see my imperfect reflection. But I love God more, and I am willing to accept and change the things about myself that are not right in His eyes. Believe me, I know how

hard that is. I have agonized over the consequences how my actions have hurt others. But I also know the love, peace and joy that true repentance brings, and I was given a new beginning and a fresh start with God. And I will have eternity in heaven. But it had to start with me, and my willingness to admit what I had done wrong.

Do want the legacy of Herodias to be your legacy as well? Read the brief history of this nefarious woman, and then decide for yourself if you want to be like her, or if you want the love and acceptance that comes with Jesus:

Herod the Great was in power at the time Jesus was born, and he was the king who had all the infants slaughtered so that the future King of the Jews would not be able to overthrow his murderous reign. He had several wives, and six sons, of which Herod Philip was one, and Herod Antipas – the same King Herod who later would crucify Jesus under Pontius Pilate – was another. These two were half-brothers, and Herodias was their niece by Aristobulus, a third half brother. If you don't think this happens today, I only need to point to soap operas, reality shows, and celebrity dramas to show you that it continues even in the twenty-first century.

Herodias first married King Herod Philip, but learned he was to be disinherited from any claims to the throne because of a scandal he was deeply a part of. He had no money, no status, no title and no future. So, Herodias strikes up an affair with his brother Herod Antipas, divorces her husband, and takes their one-year old child Salome with her. She marries Herod Antipas, and thoroughly enjoys the spoils of his reign.

Now look at yourself: Did you marry someone who has the nice car, the high-paying job, the CEO of a company who buys you jewelry, mansions and expensive clothes? Did you marry someone for the purpose of taking you out of the squalor that you were living in? Did you marry someone so that you could depend on his income, his connections, and his stature in society? Are you in a relationship just because it feels good, and because you want to simply enjoy the sensual pleasure of the other? Are you having an affair because you feel lonely? Are you being self centered and self-absorbed, focusing purely on your wants and needs? Be honest, and examine why you are in the relationship that you are in.

As the story continues, Herodias' power is undercut when she is scorned by the Prophet, and is infuriated when John the Baptist tells Herod that "it was not lawful for him to have her." (Mt 14:4) The Truth hurt...she is humiliated...and she reacts by having her own daughter Salome play the prostitute and dance provocatively so that she can demand her husband behead the one who offended her. If you ask me, her actions were brutally more offensive than the

words of John the Baptist, and is a complete overreaction - but only because the Truth cut deep.

Now, you may not have me beheaded. You may not have your own daughter by a first marriage be lust bait. But, have you gone out of your way to make your voice heard? Have you shouted down anyone who tries, even lovingly, to point out your misguided ways? Are you saying - Who are they to tell you what to do and how to live? How dare they talk to you about what you are doing wrong, when they themselves are doing much worse? Are you deflecting the Truth to prove your right to act how you see fit? Are you telling people that point out the error of your ways, that THEY are the ones with the problem?

Trust me, you are not alone. Many women of the Bible did the same thing, however their legacy is one of adultery, corruption, scandal and deception. Do you really want to be a member of this community? Do you want this to define you? And let me ask you, how happy are you – really.

It takes tremendous courage to admit your faults. It also takes tremendous courage to be vulnerable, to truly look at yourself and not like what you see. It takes monumental courage to change your life, and to put your faith in the One who will never let you down. Don't you see that He is waiting in the wings for you, and has already called you, or you wouldn't be here reading this.

Don't be her. Be the one that Christ redeems, and allow yourself to be changed for the better. Tell God what you have done is wrong. Trust me, He already knows – but you are admitting this to yourself and saying it out loud so that you can hear the truth about yourself. What have you got to lose, besides a horrible life that isn't making you happy?

Are you afraid of losing the people that you shouldn't be in a relationship with anyway? Are you afraid of being ridiculed by people who don't even care about your eternal well-being? And what do you think God is going to do when you tell Him? He is not going to point the accusing finger at you, and condemn you for what you have just said. Is that what you are afraid of? Quite the contrary, He will fold you in his arms, and whisper how much He has waited for this day, and how much He loves you. And the angels will be singing singing singing! God is not going to push you away, because He never will. Your friends might. Your bad relationships might. But God won't, because He is faithful to you even when you haven't been faithful to Him. Just remember, it was YOU pushing God away, not the other way around. Now it's time to start pulling Him towards you.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life...and no one comes to the Father except through Him. Gain love. Gain peace. Gain eternity. Gain life. Gain



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everything. Gain freedom. Gain Jesus.

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