

2025-07-06 ... 6.30pm Evensong Talk ... Mrs Jane Rylands

Genesis 29: 1 – 20; Mark 6: 7 – 29

**Mark's gospel** is written with an eye to the word count – it is relatively short! One of the techniques Mark uses to get maximum value out of his words is known as the Markan sandwich. He takes two stories and intertwines them. Last week we had Jairus's daughter and the woman who was healed by touching the edge of Jesus's cloak. By putting the stories together you are forced into that well known examiner's technique of asking you to 'compare and contrast'!

I think this evening's two stories are at first sight less similar than they are different so let's see whether we can come up with a few things to think about.

I am going to give credit to Rob for giving me a starting point – I was reading something earlier this week that he had written about power being the root cause of separating us from God.

**Jesus gives the disciples authority over unclean spirits.** That's not a human power.

He tells them that they are to take nothing with them. That's taking away a human power, the safety net – not even your 2d to make a phone call (if you were in the Brownies you'll know what I mean!)

I wonder if we hear this differently – perhaps you are excited and wish Jesus would send you out in this way? You do get one other person to go with – I wonder whether the disciples got a say in who they travelled with? Did Jesus pick someone they got on with easily or someone they found more challenging?

How comfortable are you about the idea of going out with one topic of conversation – repentance? How would you begin? (actually I think the answer to that one is quite straightforward, it goes something like this .... **We've met a man .... He did this .... We felt this ....**)

Would it have been a harder or easier thing to do back then than now?

**Let's look at the other story. Herod, he most definitely has the power. But he is not a happy man.**

He is confused – he thinks he's doing the morally right thing, keeping his promise. Perhaps he doesn't have the power in his relationships – he seems frightened of the women in his life.

John the Baptist, went out with nothing – powerless, but filled with an understanding of divine power. In this story, divine power doesn't trump human power – as it didn't when it came to Jesus's death. But – John's death continues to haunt Herod.

**What does it mean for us?** – should we be planning to go out in twos? – do we have the skills? The disciples were in training, they were called. Your / my calling might be different. Perhaps Jesus would have done it differently if he hailed from Shropshire rather than Galilee?

I've asked more questions than I've given answers this evening. Earlier in the week the Churches Together AGM was treated to a talk by a priest and story teller called Simon Airey and he said it was ok to do that!