

WEEKLY SERMON

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In a world of communication overload, listen to Jesus

Mark 6: 14-29

When I read this passage, I was struck by the phrase at the beginning, 'Jesus name was known everywhere'. By this point in his ministry, Jesus had become a famous person.

Today with the advent of social media and reality TV shows, becoming famous is not as difficult as it once was. Indeed, people can become famous - on shows like 'Gogglebox' - for simply being filmed watching television shows!

Back then things were different. There was no way of mass-producing news, so the only way that Jesus' name could have been known everywhere was by people talking about him.

So the question that naturally flows is why? Why were people talking about Jesus? What was it that caused his name to be known everywhere? Now clearly, as we can read in the Gospels which chronicle the life of Jesus, we know that Jesus is a healer. He spent much of his time healing the sick and infirm.

And in a time when life expectancy was short and there was little medical knowledge this was revolutionary. But I am not sure that was the only thing that drew people to Jesus.

We often read that Jesus taught the people, and he taught 'with authority'. In other words, when Jesus spoke people listened. This suggests he had a message that was worth listening to. The words that Jesus spoke must have been so incredible that they galvanised his listeners into talking about him to their friends and passing on Jesus' messages as they did so.

In today's culture many voices are speaking, all clamouring for our attention. We are bombarded with hundreds of different messages ranging from promotions by companies urging you to buy their products, to individuals sounding off on social media.

But how many of these messages are actually worth listening to?

With such a wealth of information coming at us every day we need to learn to filter out what is worth hearing and what to disregard. I believe this is important because whatever we fill our minds with will influence how we act and behave.

This is a notion that is played out in the remainder of this passage, as we read about Herod who, having been filled with a guilty conscience over the death of John the Baptist, automatically believes – incorrectly – that Jesus is John come back to haunt him.

The challenge for us today, in our world of communication overload, is do we fill our minds with the teaching of Jesus and be influenced by Him, or do we put our trust in things of the world that will fail us?

Rev Canon Anne Beverley, Diocesan Director of Ministry

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