

One Thing Leads to Another

by Carl McMurray

Matthew 14:1-12 is the account of John the baptizer losing his head over a woman. Not in the usual way we might think of such, mind you, but in a far more drastic occasion.

In this passage we have recorded for us the facts. Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Phillip. John, being a preacher of righteousness and preparing the way for the Messiah by calling men to repentance, told him the marriage was unlawful. As is usual in such cases, such preaching engendered no good feelings with either Herod or Herodias. The occasion soon arose where Herodias could work through her daughter, who danced for Herod, to silence John permanently, and the last we know of the baptizer, his head is on a platter, and his body is being buried by his disciples.

A better example of the title of this article would be hard to find. A man ruled by either political ambition or lust forgoes good sense and commits adultery. From the adultery come feelings of hatred when confronted, instead of penitence. When his grudge bearing hatred runs off with his momentary feelings a second time, instead of good sense, murder is the result. So, from lust to adultery to hatred to murder, one thing leads to another.

Romans 1:21-32 presents the same picture. From a simple beginning of refusing to glorify God and give Him thanks, we see a progression into the depths of depravity and selfishness. Sin is never a static act. It always continues to fester like a dread disease, if not in action, then in our heart. Whenever we sin and will not confess it and defeat it, then it continues to work in us looking for the next opportunity to burst forth and demonstrate its power over us. One of the greatest deceits Satan has quite possibly is the self deceit we use when we tell ourselves, "It's just this one time" or "Just this act and no more". One thing always leads to another, and it always gets worse.

I know it's difficult. It is difficult for all of us to defeat our nature. Let us make the effort, however, to "resist Satan" as James teaches, with full confidence that he will "flee". Let's have the wisdom and strength to say "NO" to sin at its first inception so that we will not be taken down the path to worse things. And be sure that with every temptation resisted and every battle won, your spirituality will grow and develop, step by step, level by level. Because whether it is sinful activity or righteousness - one thing leads to another.