





12  FINAL 20



Mark 6:7-13

7 And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— 9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. 10 And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.

Mark 6:7-13

11 And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

Mark 6:14-30

14 King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

17 For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

21 But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." 23 And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." 24 And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist."

25 And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. 27 And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison 28 and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Mark 6:30

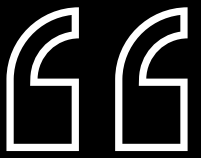
30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.

Called & Sent

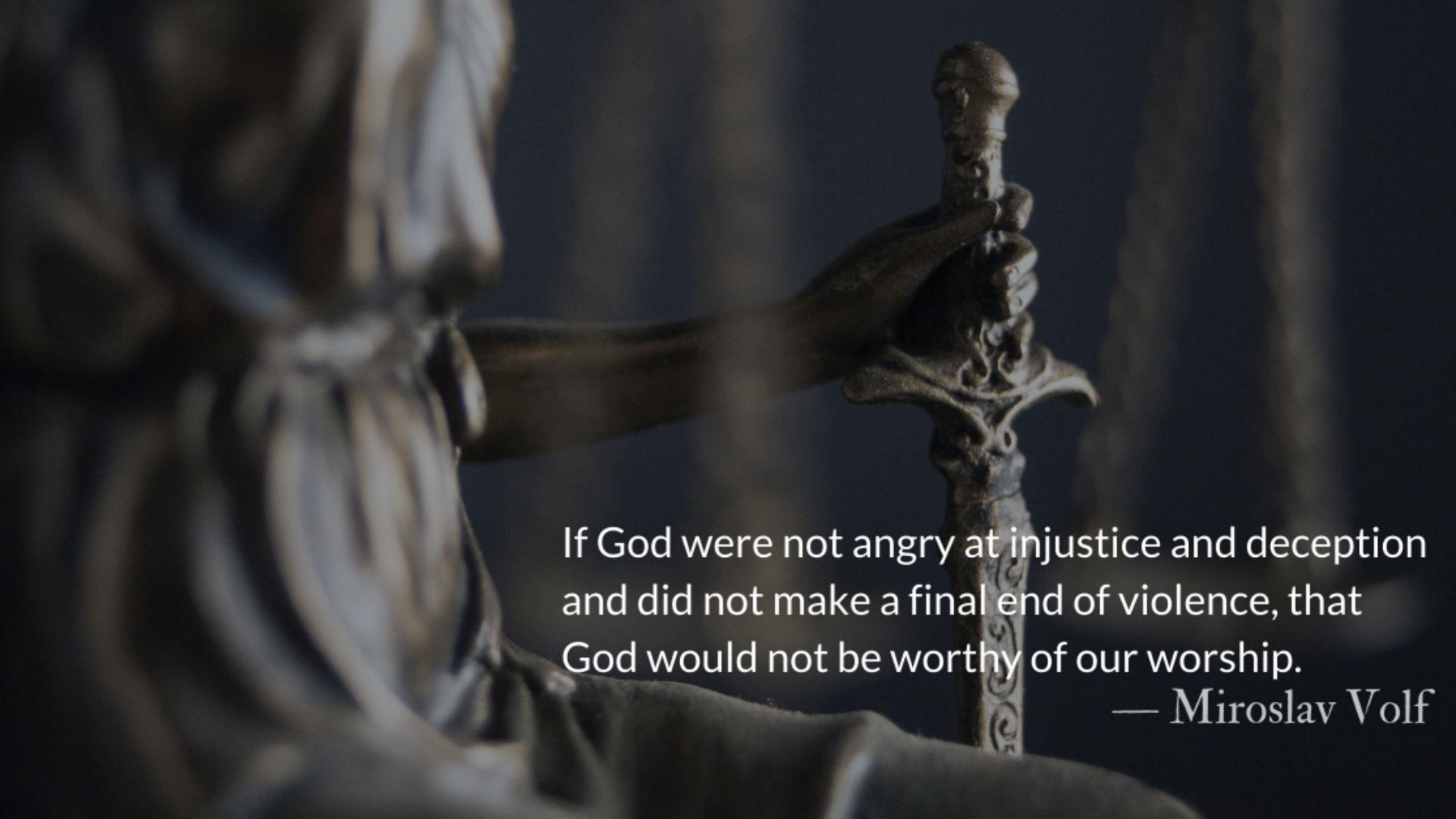
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A Yes or No Decision

11 And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.



The mission of the Twelve communicates in dramatic and harrowing fashion the seriousness of the need for Israel to repent now. The message of repentance is that God reigns. The messengers do not invite Israel to accept God's reign if it suits them; they confront people with a yes or no decision, so that there can be no middle ground. If they reject the message, they will deprive themselves of the opportunity to receive healing and deliverance. If they continue in their dogged defiance, they will face the judgment of God.

A close-up, low-key photograph of a statue. The statue is dark and appears to be made of metal or stone. It depicts a figure, possibly a religious or historical figure, holding a sword. The figure's face is in deep shadow, and the sword is held upright. The background is dark and out of focus.

If God were not angry at injustice and deception
and did not make a final end of violence, that
God would not be worthy of our worship.

— Miroslav Volf



The instructions to shake the dust from their feet indicates that the disciples' mission is to have a dramatic flair. It does not eternally condemn those who reject the rule of God, but it does convey how serious it is to do so. It also frees the messenger to move on. One cannot coerce, entice, or threaten people into the kingdom of God. Each person must make his or her own decision. Jesus recognizes that people can and will reject the gospel, but the gesture of shaking dust drives home the gravity of their rejection.

Mark 6:30

30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.



John 3:30

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Luke 7:18-23

18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, 19 calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 20 And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"

Luke 7:18-23

21 In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. 22 And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. 23 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

A Tragedy Recounted

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Joseph

Genesis 50:20



20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Moses

Exodus 2:10



10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Esther

Esther 4:14



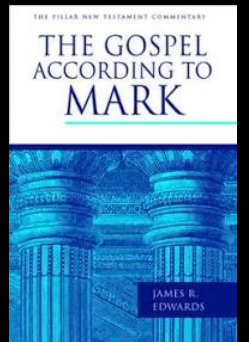
14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"







John's martyrdom prefigures more than Jesus' crucifixion, however. It also exemplifies the consequences of following Jesus in a world of greed, decadence, power, and wealth. Mark **sandwiches** the brutal and moving account of the martyrdom of the Baptist between the sending of the Twelve (6:7–13) and their return (6:30) in order to impress upon his readers the cost of discipleship.



James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 183.

Mark 8:35–37

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?



Lance Armstrong
on *Oprah*

“I was on a mission, and that mission was to win. I viewed this as a zero-sum game, and winning was everything. I didn’t see it as cheating because everyone was doing it, and I convinced myself that this was just the price of admission. I stopped asking if it was right and only asked if it worked. My whole identity was wrapped up in being the best cyclist in the world, and anyone who questioned that became a threat. I had no moral compass beyond winning.”

He is no fool
who gives
what he
cannot keep
to gain what
he cannot lose



“Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life but delivered him up for us.

Heidelberg Catechism: Question 1

Question: What is your only comfort
in life and death?

Answer: That I am not my own,
but belong with body and soul,
both in life and in death,
to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.

Gospel Response

Start:

What is your only comfort in life and death? The answer to that question is everything.

Strengthen:

The cost of discipleship is always worth it. Keep following Jesus, especially when it feels like losing.