

Sermon

#174

*Luke Sermons*

Title: **SETTING CHRIST AT NOUGHT**

Text: Luke 23:8-11

Subject: *Making Nothing of Christ*

Date: Sunday Evening — July 16, 2006

Tape # Z-05a

**Introduction:**

One man cannot display utter contempt for another more fully than by treating him as if he did not exist, treating him as if he were absolutely nothing, completely meaningless. Can you imagine any means by which you could more fully show a person how utterly contemptible he is to you? I can't. So let me ask you a question. — Is that how you treat the Lord of Glory? Do you treat the Lord Jesus Christ as if he were utterly meaningless? — As if he did not exist?

As we open our Bibles again tonight to Luke 23, I want us to back up to verses 8-11. I want to talk to you about **SETTING CHRIST AT NOUGHT**.

(Luke 23:8-11) “And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. (9) Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. (10) And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. (11) And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.”

The Lord of Glory stood before Herod and his men of war. He who is worshipped of angels, “*the brightness of his (Father’s) glory, and the express image of his person,*” the Creator and Sustainer of all things, “*the Savior of the world,*” the “*King of kings and Lord of lords,*” the incarnate Son of God; — “*And Herod with his men of war set him at nought.*” — Imagine that! What a sight of horror and shame! These insignificant little creatures made nothing of him who is “*All in all!*” They trampled beneath their feet the Holy One of God, flouting him as something utterly beneath their contempt!

**Proposition:** Horrible and contemptible as that is, it is something that is repeated by multitudes every day, and will, I fear, be repeated by some of you today.

**THE GOSPEL**

Let me begin my message by calling you to my Savior, who was set at nought by Herod and his men of war. Salvation is to be had by coming to him. It is written, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*” — Look to the Son of God alone for life and salvation. — Rely

on Christ alone for righteousness and redemption. — Trust in the crucified, risen Lord, commit yourself to him, commit the care of your immortal soul to him, looking only to him for peace, pardon, righteousness and eternal life. — *“And thou shalt be saved.”*

What a blessed word of grace that is! — *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* — Saved from sin and all its miserable effects and consequences! — Saved from the curse of the law, the power of Satan, the evil of the world, the wrath of God, and the everlasting damnation of divine justice in hell!

Christ is the cause and author of salvation. Christ is Salvation! But without faith in Christ, there is no salvation! There is an inseparable connection between believing in Christ and being saved with an everlasting salvation by Christ. Our Savior said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:16).

“Faith spies salvation in Christ, goes to him for it, receives it from him, and believes unto it.”

(John Gill)

## WHO?

Who is it that sets at nought the Son of God? This man, this embarrassment to humanity, Herod *“was desirous to see”* the Lord Jesus. He had, for a long time, *“heard many things of him.”* He hoped to see this miracle worker perform some great miracle. He was anxious to ask him numerous questions. So when the Lord Jesus stood before him, Herod *“was exceeding glad.”*

Herod was a man who **had once heard the Word of God**, and heard it with a measure of attention, and apparent benefit. We read in Mark 6:20, — *“Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.”* In fact, the words *“observed him,”* mean “kept him or saved him,” as the translation in the margin of your Bible indicates. Herod, at one time, protected John the Baptist from those who would otherwise have treated him with violence, or killed him. — **How often we see those who once heard the Gospel of Christ preached with gladness become its most vicious opposers!**

Look at look at Herod again. — After hearing the Word faithfully preached, **he deliberately violated to his own conscience.** He heard John the Baptist gladly, until John exposed and publicly denounced his vileness, telling him that his incestuous adultery with his brother’s wife was unlawful. Herodias would have killed the Baptist preacher immediately, but Herod was afraid to do so. But, to please his in house prostitute (that is the proper name for a woman who sleeps in the bed of a man to whom she is not married), he had John imprisoned.

**What a dangerous thing it is for a person to violate his own conscience!** Once the die is cast and your mind is determined, you begin to sear your conscience as with a hot iron. When you violate your conscience you start on a downward spiral from which you will not recover, except God recover you. — There are multitudes like Herod!

- Many are very please **hear men preach about Christ**, who have no interest in bowing to Christ.
- Multitudes go to church Sunday after Sunday, hoping to see the someone **perform a miracle**, who have no interest in the miracle of God's saving grace.
- Many will gladly **join in a revival**, looking for **something sensational**, who have no desire to worship the Son of God, who have no thought of **cutting off the right hand of rebellion and plucking out the right eye of ambition**.
- Multitudes are anxious to hear a man talk about **novel doctrines, prophetic notions, religious theory, and intellectual questions**, who despise the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

It is as natural for such people to set Christ and his gospel at nought as for a dog to bark!

## UPON WHAT GROUND

Upon what ground did Herod and his men of war set our Lord at nought? Men must have some reason, even for the most unreasonable acts. Why did Herod set the Son of God at nought? Why did they make nothing of him, looking upon the God-man as a man of no account, treating him as a silly, contemptible thing, an utter fool and idiot? We can only speculate about this; but I think some things are apparent.

Perhaps they looked upon the great strength of our Redeemer's **gentleness and patience** as a matter of weakness. Our Lord was not of their temper. He had no sword. He carried no weapons. He made no effort to protect or defend himself. **His visage** was marred with grief, but not with anger; worn with sorrow, but not with battle. **He appeared as a Lamb** and not a lion, a Dove and not an eagle. So those men, so swift to shed blood, despised him. Standing before them, when he was reviled the Son of God "*reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*" (1 Pet. 2:23). What an example our Savior is to us!

(1 Peter 2:20-25) "For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

The Gospel of the grace of God teaches us to be meek and gentle, to forgive injuries, and even to give up our own rights rather than to inflict wrong. Such precepts look like cowardice to hot-tempered men. The sweet savor of gentle forbearance, the spirit of Christ, they hold in contempt.

Again, our Lord was ridiculed by Herod **because he refused to gratify his curiosity** and amuse his love of sensation. This vile, little man, Herod, virtually said to the holy Lord Jesus, "Come,

work a miracle. I hear that you have raised the dead. I hear that you can multiply loaves and fishes, and feed multitudes, give us a banquet here. It has been told that you can do all things. Let me see you do something. Moses worked miracles before Pharaoh. Work a miracle before me.” But the omnipotent God stood before him, with all power in his hands, and refused lift a finger for his own deliverance and Herod’s amusement! — Because he is the same today, because his servants refuse to dazzle and amuse people, men prefer any charlatan to the servants of the Most High God,

**Herod then began to question the Savior.** He asked him first one thing and then another; but he received no answer. Our Savior, who answered blind beggars when they cried for mercy, was silent before that little fox who sought only to gratify his own irreverent curiosity. So “*Herod with his men of war set him at nought!*”

How often people look upon the preaching of the gospel with contempt because **their curiosity is not gratified by it.** They see nothing marvellous in it; so they despise it. — A gospel for the age, something new might appeal to them; but blood atonement, free grace, and salvation by the crucified Substitute is old and stale in their eyes. They know all about those things, and set them at nought. A plain gospel is too plain for them. **They desire something to adorn the message.** They want something mysterious, speculative, and debatable. They would rather see **gorgeous ceremonies** and **mutterings in an unknown tongue** amid the smoke of ignorance. The old, old story of Jesus and his love has nothing in it that appeals to them. Such simplicity, in their opinion, is only suitable for the poor, the ignorant, and the unlearned. So they set Christ at nought.

It is very likely that **the royal claims of Christ as King stirred their scorn.** I almost hear them. — “You call yourself a King? What people obey your rule? What army do you command? Where is the kingdom you govern? Here! Put the gorgeous robe on him. Let him at least look like a monarch!” — So it is today. Multitudes, while calling Jesus Lord, despise his royal authority, refusing to bow to his dominion, setting at nought his royal claim as King (Luke 14:25-33).

(Luke 14:25-33) “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, (26) If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Herod with his men of war **set at nought our Master's prophetic office** too. He asked the Lord Jesus many questions; but the Master refused to answer even one. **He stood in the majesty of quiet omniscience to the end. Omnipotence restrained the lips of omniscience!** Indignant holiness stood in absolute silence before assembled dust. **The Prophet proved his commission by his silence.** Yet he provoked their scorn, so that they set him at nought.

**In our day, because faithful men are silent upon the many questions people love to discuss, the preaching of the gospel is set at nought by most, as a thing beneath contempt.**

- When men full of **questions** receive no answer, they are irritated and angered.
- When people who demand **miracles** do not see them performed, they set aside the gospel of the grace of God as a useless thing.
- When those who deem themselves intellectuals crave discussions about the controversies that divided dead theologians of the past, **church history, creeds, confessions and denominations**, and we refuse to dance to their piping, we are derided as contemptible morons.
- When those who think they have figured out prophecy as us about **the future**, and we ignore their brilliance, and insist upon preaching the Gospel, the Gospel we preach is set at nought.

### **SET AT NOUGHT TODAY**

But Herod with his men of war are dead and buried. What about today? Are you guilty of setting Christ at nought?

- Some of you set him at nought, like the Rich Young Ruler, because **you love the world.**
- Some of you set the Lord Jesus at nought because **you prefer amusement and entertainment** to the worship and service of our Savior.

I do not denounce healthy recreation, but everything should be in order; and **I claim first place for Christ and his salvation.** — Is it not worth while to give up a football, basketball, or baseball game, or a round of golf or tennis to worship the Savior? — Do you prefer a night of pleasure to the pardon of your sin? — Our Master's blood and righteousness, the salvation men's souls, and the preparing of your heart for heaven ought to be more important to eternity bound men and women than the bubbles of this world!

- The plain truth is this. — You who set Christ at nought do so because **you have no need of him.** — You do not need his righteousness! — You do not need his precious blood! — You do not need his grace — You do not need his forgiveness!
- You set him at nought **to whom you owe everything!**
- You set at nought the Son of God because there is **no fear of God** in you!

## OTHER WAYS

I have tried to be as pointed as possible. I want, by the Spirit of God, to speak to your heart. It is my intention to expose your sin and leave you, in your own conscience, without excuse before God. But, now, I want us to look at some other ways described in the Word of God by which men and women set at nought the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Our God tells us that **every willful rejection of the Gospel** is setting at nought the Lord Jesus (Pro. 1:23-26)

(Proverbs 1:20-33) “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: (21) She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, (22) How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? (23) Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: (30) They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. (31) Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (32) For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (33) But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

- The Lord Jesus declares that religious men and women set at nought the Word of God by their **traditions**. — “*Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye*” (Mark 7:13).
- The Holy Spirit tells us that all who **seek righteousness by the law** set at nought the whole gospel, making the death of Christ, the grace of God and the promise of the Gospel on non-effect (Gal. 2:21; 5:1-4; Rom. 4:14).

(Galatians 2:21) “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

(Galatians 5:1-4) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

(Romans 4:14) “For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”

- The Apostle Paul declares that **every attempt of man to adorn the Gospel by preaching it in the words of man's wisdom** is to set it at nought (1 Cor. 1:17-19; 2:1-5).

(1 Corinthians 1:17-19) “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (18) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5) “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

- Turn to Romans 14:10, and learn this. — **Every failure to esteem** our brother or sister in Christ as Christ himself, **every abuse or neglect** of one of God's dear children is to set at nought Christ himself!

(Romans 14:9-10) “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

(Romans 14:13) “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.”

## OUR LAMENTATION

Now, let me speak plainly to and about you who are my brothers and sisters in Christ. What do we say about our Lord? Herod set him at nought and made nothing of him. What do we make of him?

- **We mourn and lament the fact that we once did exactly the same thing.** We once esteemed him nothing! It was nothing to us that the Lord of Glory was crucified!
- It is now **our hearts' grief** to see him set at nought by anyone.
- Should you ask this poor sinner, who has been saved by and experienced so much of God's marvellous grace, — “What do you make of Christ now?” — I can but answer, — “*Christ is All!*”

“I entered once a home of care,  
Old age and poverty were there,  
Yet peace and joy withal:  
I asked the lonely mother, whence  
Her helpless widowhood’s defense;  
She told me, Christ was all!

I stood beside a dying bed,  
Where laid a saint with aching head,  
Waiting for Jesus’ call:  
I marked his smile, ‘twas sweet as May;  
And, as his spirit passed away,  
He whispered, Christ is all!

I saw the martyr at the stake,  
The flames could not his courage shake,  
Nor death his soul appall:  
I asked him whence such strength was given,  
He looked triumphantly to heaven,  
And answered, Christ is all!

I saw the gospel herald go  
To Afric’s sand and Greenland’s snow,  
To save from Satan’s thrall!  
Nor home, nor life he counted dear,  
‘Midst wants and perils owned no fear;  
He felt that Christ was all.

I dreamed that hoary time had fled,  
And earth and sea gave up their dead,  
And fire dissolved this ball:  
I saw the Church’s ransomed throng;  
I heard the burden of their song —  
‘Twas Christ is all in all!

Then come to Jesus! come today;  
The Father, Son, and Spirit say;  
The Bride repeats the call;  
Come! He will cleanse your guilty stains;  
His love will soothe away your pains;  
For Christ is all in all!”

(Lamentations 1:12) “*Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger.”



(Acts 4:11-12) “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (12) Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Amen.