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*Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July – Sixth Sunday after Trinity*  
*Readings: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 & Mark 6:14-29*

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## **2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19**

### **The ark brought to Jerusalem**

David again brought together all the able young men of Israel – thirty thousand. He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with castanets, harps, lyres, tambourines, rattles and cymbals.

### **David becomes king over Israel**

Now King David was told, ‘The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.’ So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.

They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

## Mark 6:14-29

### John the Baptist beheaded

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, 'John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.'

Others said, 'He is Elijah.'

And still others claimed, 'He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.'

But when Herod heard this, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!'

For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, 'Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you.' And he promised her with an oath, 'Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.'

She went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?'

'The head of John the Baptist,' she answered.

At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: 'I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a dish.'

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a dish. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

# Reflection

There's a common link between the two passages today. Dancing. And that's not something that's often preached about or highlighted as part of the Christian life. Does dancing have a place in our lives, in the Christian life?

Well it was ok for David. "David and ALL the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals." It's good, and it seems God is ok with it. In fact, probably more than ok with it.

And we can't ignore that it can have a strong emotional impact in both situations. "Michal... saw King David leaping.. and she despised him in her heart" and in Mark 6 "Herodias 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."... the head of John the Baptist on a plate". Both David and Herodias' dancing had a powerful, life-changing, emotional effect on others. However, that isn't an argument not to dance. God obviously liked David dancing, and it feels good to do it.

As a Physiotherapist I can confirm that movement is good for us. It's a key part of life and is healthy. At the height of COVID restrictions we were still allowed out to exercise for 1 hour a day, and rightly so. It's important to move and use our bodies. Bring together movement and music and you get dance. Do you dance?

Can I ask you to watch this? <https://youtu.be/ne6tB2KiZuk>

There is inherent music within us waiting to come out (as it happens something called the pentatonic scale). And it is easily drawn out with movement. And it connects people. Remember the audience reaction? They interacted naturally and sang the right notes with each other. The whole audience is drawn together and go in the same direction with the same pitch led by movement linked to music. Sort of dancing, but I chose it because it demonstrates connection as well, with ourselves, with others and with God.

Movement and music go together, and one can bring on the other, they can bring on strong emotional reactions, and they connect in many ways. It therefore

seems logical to conclude that God loves music, movement and putting them together. And it is good for us, individually and as a community, and I would argue for our personal and family relationship with God.

So what place does dancing, moving to music, have for each of us and us as a church? Are we missing something by not doing it in our worship? Is it something we should be encouraging in our worship? In fact, is it just an optional extra? Dancing; music and movement mean connection, with ourselves, with each other, with God. That's worth pondering on, and maybe dancing to.

Iain Beith