

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 “Say to Daughter Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Expectation vs. Reality - Nailed It

If you're a crafty person then you might spend some time on Pinterest. It's a site where you can save crafts or ideas for later and recreate them yourself. I'm not a Pinterester but I do like looking at Pinterest fails. The before and after pictures of people recreating crafts. The expectation vs the reality of what they've done. Most of them are captioned with “Nailed It.” They're hilarious failures but I imagine many are disappointed. I set expectations and goals for myself but then the reality hits and an avocado tree is suddenly an avocado stick. It's disappointing.

But it's nothing in comparison to the disappointment we find in our lesson. Jesus too has hopes and expectations for his people. Jesus certainly knows all things but that doesn't mean he can't be hurt when his people fail him. Jesus wants all to know who he is but sometimes they just don't get it.

Maybe you know the same feeling when someone disappoints you. It's even worse when you disappoint yourself because then there is no one to blame, unless you've prayed about it, you've poured out your heart, you've worked hard and then you just might blame God. Do you have expectations of God? I know I do and if we can't trust him with the small things will he ever be able to take care of the big things? Can God be trusted? God wants us

to be absolutely certain about who he is and what he has done. He is our God who changes our expectations it's not that he lowers them or tells us don't have any but rather he changes them and leaves us without disappointment.

Jesus however wants everyone to know who he is and why he has come. He has a set of expectations that sounds as if Jesus suddenly turns into some sort of prima donna. I can't walk. Go into town. Find a donkey and bring them to me. *If anyone asks just say, "The Lord needs them."* I can almost imagine the disciples slipping into town under the cover of darkness, popping the locks and then setting off the alarm. The owner rushes to the door, "What are you doing with my truck?" For them to respond, "*The Lord needs it,*" sounds like a Jedi mind trick and doesn't seem to fit with reality. How can Jesus expect this to work?

How can Jesus hold to such lofty expectations? Because that's what was written. Zechariah set the expectations of what kind of King the people should be looking for. "*A king, humble, and riding on a donkey - the Ford Ranger of the animal kingdom.*" *Speaking peace to the nations.* Jesus hasn't suddenly decided I can't walk anymore. He does however want everyone to be clear about who he is. He is the King - fulfilling every prophecy ever written.

The disciples went and did as he had said. The crowds gathered "*spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"* I wonder if that is what Jesus expected? They shout, rejoice but then the disappointment comes with a question, "*Who is this?*" The prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

This isn't even a Pinterest fail. Not even close. Not, "You are the Christ. The Son of God." The same response heard earlier from Peter but rather the same answer, the expected answer to Jesus question, "Who do the people say I am?" "Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." The crowds are so caught up in the moment they don't know who Jesus is. They're only thinking about what this might mean for them. They didn't even know what kind of King he is. Soon the reality would hit them and they would be left disappointed but for now the disappointment is only seen on Jesus face. Luke records that Jesus wept as he approached Jerusalem - Why? John 1:11. *He came to his own but his own did not receive him.* Their expectations were not the same as Jesus' expectations and they would be disappointed.

We have a number of expectations. Our American way of thinking is that anything is possible given enough effort, if we just try hard enough we will be successful but then

reality reminds us that it doesn't matter how much effort or how hard you try expectations aren't always met. Life doesn't work out as expected. The golden years aren't so golden. The health we thought we'd have doesn't look so healthy. The results are often anger or disappointment with God.

So a solution is to aim low, have no expectations and then we will always be happy. Setting low expectations may seem easy but it's impossible in practice. Never having expectations leads to depression and anger. Sometimes we have the wrong expectations of our God and why he has come. It's not so we can establish a kingdom here on earth. God has come for all nations to bring peace to the nations. But rather than peace we may want him to bring comfort, health, wealth, security. God is here to meet our expectations and grant us our every desire. If you worship the God of the vending machine who is only here to dispense goods - you will be left disappointed. Because Jesus isn't here to guard us from disappointment.

Scripture sets our expectations what it tells us is how we've failed to live up to God's expectations. We are disappointing to him. Just like Israel and even his disciples were disappointing on that day. They only saw Jesus as a prophet, a great teacher, or a miracle worker who could provide them with bread. They wanted a King who would ride them of the Romans. We too may see him as a good friend, co-pilot, grandfather who grants wishes and anything less than creator and ruler of the world who went on to suffer and die for his creation. .

It's not that Jesus set his expectations too high and he bit off more than he could chew. It's that his people are failures. Not just the people of Jerusalem but his disciples as well. Jesus is the true king of the people and he is coming to die. The Irony is that the crowds have no idea who he is and yet they proclaim him king. They cry out to him, "Hosanna!" Save us. Save now. That is exactly what Jesus would do. All of this had been carefully planned and carried out by God for the beginning of time.

Jesus entered Jerusalem with confidence on a beast of burden. Jesus came in humility but riding a donkey into Jerusalem is far from humbling. That displays some confidence. Psalm 118 is about a King returning to his people in triumph. All of his enemies have been laid waste. This displays confidence - what can men do to me? All my enemies have been put underfoot. There are no more enemies. Jesus returns to his people having defeated everything the devil could throw at him. Nothing and no one can harm him now. He returns for his throne and the high point of his life does not come here but in five days on Good Friday, from the cross.

Jesus' expectation is reality. And yet no-one understood. Not even his disciples. They would disappoint him. Like a teacher watching the class fail Jesus saw the hopes of his disciples dashed when they denied him, deserted him, and betrayed him. When Jesus was led off to be crucified disappointment sank in. They were depressed. They mourned the death of their friend and brother. The death of their hopes and dreams. Even after three days in the tomb the disciples on the way to Emmaus, "*We had hoped he would be the one to redeem Israel.*" Their expectations were shattered because their expectations weren't big enough. They couldn't make sense of it. They didn't remember what Jesus had said.

Jesus came to do something so much greater than redeem Israel from the Romans. He came for his throne, the cross. He came to die for the sins of the enemies of Israel. He came to endure the crushing disappointment of his Father, be abandoned by friends, courts, and even his Father. Mocked by criminals. Forsaken by God but then the unexpected. Jesus came back. He told the disciples. He came back and he changed their expectations..

It's not that we set our expectations too high and God can't fulfill them. It's that they aren't high enough. We're only thinking about this world and what he can do here and now. God didn't come to meet our every expectation. He loved us too much to be the Savior we want. He is the Savior we need. The one who gives us the proper expectations of a world to come and that is the reality we have. The irony is that often we don't get it. But we are forgiven and redirected.

Realize who Jesus is. He did not come to defeat our enemies and help us find parking spots. He came to serve and give His life as a ransom for sin. While this week make look like one big disappointment where Jesus got in over his head. This was all part of his plan. He knew what he was doing. He knew where he was going. He knew how ironic it was that even those close to him didn't get it. But this is your king who rides on to die.

Because of his work, you aren't a disappointment. When God looks at you he sees his son. He doesn't regret anything. Even when we look like a poor imitation of what a Christian should be he still thinks, "Nailed it." He's right. He nailed our every imitation to the cross. He raises our expectations beyond the grave, beyond death to a life without sin, pain, suffering, and disappointment.

Dare I say, "A life without Pinterest?" No. Raise your expectations. Dream big because this world isn't big enough. Life isn't about unmet expectations, being optimistic, or pessimistic, great expectations or no expectations but the reality of what Christ has created for us. The reality is peace with God forever. That is what he accomplished. Amen.