

March 28, 2021 James Gallahe
Palm Sunday: Expectations and Preconceived Ideas

Most of us would rather be known for who we are rather than what we do. We all have perceptions of preachers. Many have expectations and experiences that are not good. Those preconceived ideas...it's the same with Israel's idea of Jesus. Palm Sunday is the beginning of Passion Week. When Jesus showed up in Jerusalem, they were ready for something to happen. After 400 years of not hearing from God through the prophets, Jesus shows up and there is rejoicing. Israel was downcast, marginalized, oppressed and ready to receive a King.

John 12:12-19 *On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel." Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT." These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."*

Zechariah 9:9-10 *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

They were waiting for the promise – can you imagine waiting that long? Hosanna means “save now.” They wanted to be saved from the oppression. Their expectation was right but their perception was seeking something different from Jesus. Their preferences didn't match reality and they missed who He was. People want their heroes to win not suffer and die. Preconceived ideas let us down and they don't change the truth, they just lie to us about it. Israel was told what would happen, but only saw with their own desires.

Jesus wasn't secretive about who He was. **Matthew 16:13-16** *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

In the midst of all Jesus was doing, many still believed He was just a good guy or a prophet. Many today are the same. **Acts 1:6** *So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"*

Even after spending so much time with Jesus, they were still expecting a different kind of king. After asking the question (Acts 1:6), He left. Jesus says I'm going back to Heaven but I'm sending you the Holy Spirit to empower you to get through difficulties. He will be a companion to you. Then He ascended to Heaven.

Do people miss the truth because of preconceived ideas of who Jesus is? Or because reality doesn't match their expectation of whom He was and is? Or because someone doesn't represent Him the right way?

Luke 23:18-21 *But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!"*

Four days after shouting "Hosanna," meaning "save us now," they shouted, "crucify." Pilate couldn't find anything wrong with Jesus and offers to release one man – Barabbas or Jesus. How quickly our perspective changes when our expectations don't meet our reality.

Do you have preconceived ideas about Jesus or church? The church does not always represent His Kingdom well. But whatever your experience has been, what never changes is the truth of who Jesus is. Don't miss the truth of who Jesus is. Israel was desperate for a king. Jesus came to give them what they needed, not to give them what they wanted. They didn't need a king; they needed a Savior. So it is for us...we don't need a hero to fix our problems; we need a Savior. We need the only one that can redeem our lives. That's what Holy week is about – the Redeemer, who laid His life down for us.

Some say Jesus didn't have a choice because our sin put Him on the cross. Jesus went to the cross willingly because He loves us. Jesus chose to lay down His life to purchase our redemption completely. All we have to do is receive it. There is no more debt to pay. The debt was paid by Jesus with His blood. All we have to do is ask. We cannot DO anything to be worthy enough. He offers freedom from the guilt and shame and the weight that we are carrying.

Experience the truth and the peace that only Jesus can give by confessing Jesus with our mouth and believe in our heart that He is Lord. Eternity in Heaven is promised to all who believe and confess Jesus as Lord.

Does your expectation of Jesus match the reality of who He is in your life?

Do you have an experience of someone misrepresenting Christ?

How can you help others know the reality of who Jesus is?