



Message Series Guide

The Pursuit of Happiness

Part 4 – Expectations of Others

Proverbs 13:12 + Matthew 21:1-11

Everybody knows how unmet expectations can lead to disappointment, discouragement, and doubt. Unmet expectations can make us doubt God's love and His good intentions. Questions like "Does God even care about my desires?" can erode our trust and diminish our hope (Proverbs 13:12). If we leave these responses unaddressed, we risk falling into a constant state of discouragement and negativism. When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, He was greeted by cheers and shouts of praise. Some thought He came to be a powerful reigning king or a mighty general who would wage war against an oppressive government. When those expectations went unmet, triumph quickly led to a trial, and excitement turned to an execution on a cross.

READ:

Proverbs 13:12 • Matthew 21:1-11 • Jeremiah 29:11 • Romans 8:28 • Isaiah 26:3

- According to Proverbs 13:12, what do delayed expectations lead to? Why? What can we do stay focused in times of waiting? How can we affirm that our expectations of God are accurate?
- When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the crowd celebrated him like a powerful king or a mighty military general. Why did you think the people expected Jesus to be either (or both) of these?
- The laying down of a cloak was a sign of submission. The palm branch was a symbol of royalty. What did these two actions say about the people's expectations of Jesus?
- The crowd shouted "Hosanna" which is a Hebrew word meaning "save us". What did the crowd believe they needed saved from? Why did they really need salvation? How the people ultimately respond to Jesus' mission? How do you respond when Jesus doesn't meet your expectations?
- The crowd recognized Jesus as a prophet from Nazareth. They didn't fully acknowledge Him as the Son of God. What is the difference between honoring Jesus and recognizing Him as Savior? How do people today honor Jesus, but not recognize Him as Savior?

DISCUSS:

- Share about a deep disappointment from your life when your expectations were not met. How did that impact your emotions and your faith?
- Many people were disappointed when Jesus didn't fulfill their expectations. How do you think we often formulate our expectations about how God should behave toward us?
- What are some unrealistic expectations we sometimes have of God? What can we do to keep our expectations of God rooted in truth? How can the time we spend in God's Word influence this?
- The people of Jerusalem did understand why Jesus came. In truth, their expectations were too small. We do the same. Share a time past or present that you have asked too little of God. Has God ever worked beyond your expectations by meeting a need in a way only He could?

PRAY:

Pray that God will reveal any unrealistic expectations you have of Him, and help you turn away from the God who was supposed to be so you can trust the God who truly is.

RESPOND:

Consider and write down your expectations of God, and then search the Scriptures to determine if these expectations are biblically accurate.



Sermon Notes

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The word, “deferred,” means *delayed* or *suspended*.

“The feeling of being let down is actually one of life’s toughest emotional experiences.”

“Feelings of disappointment are linked to the levels of dopamine released during positive life experiences.”

- Nov. 9, 2016 – “The Chemistry of Addiction Explains Why Disappointment Hurts So Badly” - By Maia Szalavitz.

Unmet expectations can lead to great hurt; but they can also lead to great growth.

The phrase, “stirred up”, means *turmoil*. It’s where we get our word, *seismic*

Most Googled Questions About God”

Where is God?

Why does God allow suffering?

Why is God silent?

Why does God need so much praise?

Why does God hate me?

- September 2015 – New York Times – “Googling for God” – by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz

Our God is not a God who meets our expectations. He is a God who meets our needs.

The word, “disillusioned,” means *the loss of an illusion*.

Disillusionment allows us to turn away from the God who was supposed to be so we can trust the God who is.