

INTRO

- Tell of a time when your expectations either exceeded or fell short of reality.

We end our Lenten series as we now enter into Holy Week on Palm Sunday, the name of which comes from today's text.

READ

John 12:12-26

REFLECT & RESPOND

In this passage we see Jesus entering Jerusalem for the Passover festival. His public ministry is drawing to a close and he is at the height of his popularity, having recently raised Lazarus from the grave. The messianic expectation around Jesus is high. But what Jesus does next is unexpected. Instead of arriving in Jerusalem as a triumphant king typically on a horse, he chooses the lowly donkey. He's clearly embracing his kingship, but on his terms, not the crowds.

Qu: the crowd justifiably had a heightened expectation of Jesus, but he seems to reject this. What does this tell us about our expectations of Jesus and how we think he should act?

Those closest to Jesus, his disciples, are also confused. Only after Jesus' death and resurrection would they grasp the kind of king Jesus declared himself to be (v16). Jesus truly is a powerful King, but an unexpected One at that.

Qu: how does the death and resurrection of Jesus challenge and shape your expectations of him?

Finally, Jesus declares, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." The hour being his death by crucifixion which, paradoxically, is also his moment of glory. According to John,

Jesus is not glorified *despite*, but through and in, the humiliation, suffering and death of the Cross. Jesus could've received the glory, honour and fame from the crowd, but instead chose the glory of the Cross. In so doing, the pattern of Jesus' life becomes the pattern of the lives of his followers.

Whoever serves me must follow me. — Jesus

- Whoever = anyone and everyone is invited
- Serves = humility
- Follow = followers, not fans (ie. the crowd), is what Jesus is seeking.

And we follow him on the same paradoxical path of life through death, glory through serving and suffering.

Qu: contrast how our world goes after glory and honour and how Jesus reframes glory and honour. How does this both encourage and challenge you?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for one another, for our church community, and for those around you who don't follow Jesus yet.