



10 APR 2022 | PS BEN KC LEE | *UNEXPECTED: PALM SUNDAY* | MATTHEW 21:1-12

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. See Jesus for who He really is – the Saviour we need – rather than the one we may want.
2. Thrive in the unexpected, trusting God in all our situations.

SERMON SUMMARY

Misdirected expectations can cause us to miss what God is up to. As a result, our expectations of God can be incomplete, distorted, or insufficient. Let go of your expectations and come afresh to Him. In this season, we believe that it is a “Kairos” moment for God’s transformative touch on our church. Let’s not miss out on God’s move/touch because of misdirected expectations. Let’s be open to His move among us and within us; regardless of how He moves.

SERMON RECAP

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowd cried “Hosanna”, they all expected Him to liberate them immediately from Roman rule. They had misguided expectations of Jesus, which He overturned in the following days till His crucifixion.

1. Jesus comes in unexpected ways (v 1-7)

- Don’t be surprised when Jesus comes to you in an unexpected fashion.
- Maybe He will come to you walking on water in the middle of your fiercest storm to bring help.
- When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He was riding a donkey. He wasn’t on a horse. Accompanying Him were His disciples and the common masses, not soldiers in chariots. Although He is the King and Son of God, He came humbly.

2. Jesus loves unexpected people (v 8-11)

- Jesus loves people from all walks of life. He loved the crowd who welcomed Him on Palm Sunday, even though they would later petition to crucify Him.
- Jesus is the demonstration of God’s unconditional love; the Lamb of God who was slaughtered for the sins of the world.
- Don’t be surprised when Jesus still loves you though you have failed Him. He is still loving us and showing this love in the unexpected ways of grace.



3. Jesus does unexpected things (v 12)

- Don't be surprised when He comes and completely transforms us from the inside out. Don't be surprised when He saves, delivers and heals you.
- The crowd expected Jesus to be their Saviour to overturn the Roman government. Instead, He cleaned up the temple and later died on a cross (like a criminal) – completely opposite of what they expected.

Let's welcome the King, strip off all our expectations, and come before Him afresh.

Recommended Resource: [*When God Shows Up: How to Recognise the Unexpected Appearances of God in Your Life*](#) by RT Kendall

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Are there unexpected interruptions to your life plans today? What do you think God is saying to you in the unexpected?** [15 mins]

Leader's Notes

This is a recap and reflect question. Jesus comes to us in unexpected fashion. Interruptions could be Jesus coming to us when we least expect it. Are there any life plan(s) that have been interrupted by forces that are not within your control? Do you think it could be Jesus interrupting those plan(s)? What do you think is the reason for the interruption?

"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." – Proverbs 16:9

Sometimes, God comes to us through a storm. In the midst of it, He reveals who He is to us and causes us to realise that our dependence is on Him. Therefore, let us rise to the occasion when the unexpected happens. There is divine potential in uncertainties. Trust in our God who is faithful beyond our understanding. Where Jesus is, the unexpected happens.

Transition


Instead of rejecting an unexpected interruption or despairing over it, we must learn to trust and recognise that God has a plan for all of us – see Jeremiah 29:11. And His plans are infinitely better than ours. Consider accepting His will for us, and humbly ask Him to lead us down the path He has for us.

2. **What kind of king is Jesus to you today? How can you honour Him as the King that He is, not as what you may expect?** [10 mins]

Leader's Notes

We all hold certain expectations of God. We may think of Him as the magical genie that fulfils all our wishes, and when He doesn't, we are disappointed and turn our backs on Him.

We need to let go of our expectations of God, and see Him for who He is. How do we get to know the 'real' God? By reading the Bible and humbly coming to Him. Talk to Him daily. Read the Bible, keeping a lookout for the characteristics of God in all that you read.



Accept His answers to your prayers. It may not be the answer you want or expect, but trust that it is the best for you and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the areas of your life that He is refining. Then continue to faithfully honour Him in all that you do without grumbling or doubting.

Transition

When we hold misguided expectations of God, we may miss His blessings and goodness towards us. Let go of them and see that all He is doing is good.

3. How can we share the hope and joy to those around us this week because of Good Friday and Easter? [15 mins]

Leader's Notes

Easter is the victorious story of Jesus defeating death – rising after death on the Cross. And because He rose again, there is hope for us and the promise of eternal life. That hope and joy is to be celebrated and meant to be shared with those around us. Wouldn't you want your loved ones or friends to share with you the good things they have discovered?

God may not be what our pre-believing friends expected of a god (based on their previous experiences). He is relational unlike the other gods. He cares for the smallest details of their lives. He made the first move to love us. He is so much better than they expected. He can come in unexpected ways into their lives! So, let us give them the opportunity to encounter God.

Perhaps we can invite them to RiverLife for the Easter service on Sunday (17 Apr). Or we can have a meal with our pre-believing friends on Good Friday and share with them the meaning of Good Friday and Easter. Even posting a Christian article about Good Friday and Easter on social media could help. Think about the ways you individually (or together as a cell) could share the hope and joy of Good Friday and Easter to those around us.

Easter e-Invite: rlc.sg/easter

Easter Evangelistic Resource: rlc.sg/easter-outreach

Closing

Let's not keep the Good News to ourselves but share it with others. Allow them to encounter the God of the unexpected.



WORKS

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- For us to expect the unexpected from God and to thrive in it.
- For us to strip away all our expectations of what God is and should be, and simply trust in all His ways.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Praise God for the decrease in community cases.
- Pray for God's continued protection of our lives and livelihoods.

3. COVID-19 in the World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Healing and comfort for those who are sick and suffering.
- Protection and guidance for healthcare professionals at the frontline, giving them wisdom, courage, and strength to confront this crisis.


4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **Easter Sunday.** We will be celebrating Easter Sunday on 17 Apr. This Easter, we encourage you to reach out to your pre-believing family and friends. The e-invite can be downloaded via the link on screen (rlc.sg/easter), and we have a limited number of hardcopy flyers available at Information Counter that you can pick up. We've put together a digital kit with conversation starters to help you share the Gospel – you can access it via the link on screen (rlc.sg/easter-outreach).
2. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](https://rlc.sg/bulletin) for more details.
3. **SuperLife Camp 2022 (Save the Date).** SuperLife Camp is happening on 9-11 Jun for children in Primary 1-6. Registration details will be shared in a few weeks' time.
4. **MegaLife Camp 2022.** Our Youth ministry, MegaLife, will be organising a camp for your teens from 18-20 June during the school holidays. You may sign up for your child online via this link (rlc.sg/mlc2022) and make payment in-person at



the Information Counter on the following days: Sat, 16 Apr, 4.30pm to 5.30pm or Sun, 17 Apr, 10.30am to 11.30am

5. **Missions from Home.** In order to find out more information concerning our mission initiatives in the nations and how you can participate, visit our new mission website. (rlc.sg/mfh)
6. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:
 - You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rcs2022.
 - You can support the work of RCS by participating in our annual Family Movie Day. For instructions on how you can watch a movie this June holidays and stand for families visit this link rlc.sg/rcsmovie.
 - You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rcs.org.sg.
7. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
8. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
9. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. **NO booking of tickets is required.**
10. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
11. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
12. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

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