



Redefining Expectations

April 13, 2025 Sermon Study Guide **Lee Towns-Redefining Expectations:** **The Cross is the Process** ***Jesus Predicts His Death***

²⁰ Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration²¹ paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” ²² Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man^[1] to enter into his glory. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.²⁷ “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name.” Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” ²⁹ When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.³⁰ Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine.³¹ The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³² And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate how he was going to die.³⁴ The crowd responded, “We understood from Scripture^[m] that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?”

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Last week we were asked to consider living as a "we" rather than a "me". Navigating life as a community or a village of people who are of one heart and one mind even in the midst of their differences.
 - A solitary lifestyle was not what God had in mind when He created us so this week how did you choose to navigate life differently as one heart and one mind unified with others?

2. On Palm Sunday the crowd expected Jesus to be their King their Conqueror and their Defender. And we know that He was and is, but they had not seen the end of the movie yet and watched as the credits rolled. How was their view different from ours?
 - They likely never imagined that their King would be nailed to a cross so soon after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But to move from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday the path forward for Jesus was stepping into Good Friday. And that required a terrible death on a cross. When you think of that scene what do you see?

- Now look back, rewind and consider how was Palm Sunday *redefined* by the events of Good Friday?

3. The Cross as a symbol may mean something different to you than it does to your neighbor. What first comes to mind when you see a cross hanging on a wall or stationed in a place of prominence in a church?

- What image stands out when you see a cross hanging around someone's neck or on a bracelet?

Many Coptic Christians have a cross tattooed inside their wrist. For them the cross as a symbol is powerful. *"Getting the cross tattooed on our wrists was a sign of symbolism and endurance. The cross signifies our history in Egypt and reminds us of our past and present," says Mona Ibrahim, a Coptic Christian living in Egypt. The practice is thus deeply embedded in a historical, cultural, and political context in Egypt. It became the symbol of radical expression and faithfulness in the midst of difficult times.*

4. What makes you uncomfortable as you think of the crucifixion?

5. How do you reconcile that what Jesus endured on the cross was for expressly for you?

- Jesus in Luke 9 spoke to a crowd but the message is for us as well. We are called to pick up our cross daily and follow Him. What does that look like in your daily life?

6. Think back at times in your faith journey when you believed your faith in Jesus would make life better, easier, safer and nicer. When did you discover that following Jesus would show you the way through pain and suffering but not show you a way around it?

7. Without the cross and the sacrifice made by our Savior there would be no tomb or resurrection.
 - The empty tomb signals something counter intuitive to us, it signals an abundant life. An empty tomb redefined life as we previously knew it.
 - What does an abundant life because of Jesus represent for you?
 - What does your salvation story sound like? Share it this week with someone who needs to hear the *euangelion* (Greek for good news.)