

Study Guide: The King We Expected and the King We Need

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to receive what God wants to speak.

Icebreaker Question

What is one expectation you had about your life that turned out differently than you imagined? How did you respond?

Key Scripture

Luke 19:28-44 - The Triumphal Entry

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Jesus voluntarily moved toward His destiny** - He wasn't forced to the cross; He chose it for us.
2. **The crowd praised Jesus for what He did, not for who He was** - They wanted a political deliverer, not a spiritual Savior.
3. **A heart aligned with God recognizes the true King** - Like Mary at Bethany, we worship with believing love, generous love, and condescending love.
4. **Unmet expectations can lead to spiritual danger** - When life doesn't go as planned, we risk judging God unfairly.
5. **We must seek His face, not just His hands** - Worship Him for who He is, not just for what He can do for us.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Luke 19:28-44 together.** What stands out to you most about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem? Why do you think all four Gospel writers included this account?
2. The sermon mentioned that Jesus came on a donkey (representing peace and humility) rather than a war horse. What does this tell us about the nature of His kingdom?
3. Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem even as the crowds were praising Him? What does this reveal about His heart?

Personal Reflection

4. **The critical question:** Are you following Jesus for who He is or for what you want Him to do for you? Be honest with yourself and the group.
5. Have you ever experienced a time when God didn't answer a prayer the way you expected? How did that affect your relationship with Him?
6. The pastor shared about hearing God say, "You have judged me unrighteous." Have you ever felt disappointed with God? What happened?

Going Deeper

7. **Mary's worship (John 12:3)** demonstrated:
 - Believing love
 - Generous love
 - Condescending (humble) loveWhich of these aspects of worship is most challenging for you? Why?
8. The crowd's expectations were for political deliverance from Rome, but Jesus came to offer spiritual deliverance from sin. What "wrong expectations" might we bring to Jesus today?
9. **James 4:14-16** reminds us to say, "If the Lord wills..." How can we balance having faith-filled expectations with surrendering to God's will?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

1. **Maintain an attitude of gratitude**
 - Start a gratitude journal
 - Write down 10 things you're thankful for each day
 - Focus on what you DO have, not what you don't
2. **Seek His face, not just His hands**
 - Spend time in worship without asking for anything
 - Read Psalm 27:8 daily and respond: "Your face, Lord, will I seek"
 - Thank God for who He is, not just what He does
3. **Surrender your expectations**
 - Make a list of unmet expectations you're holding onto
 - Pray over each one: "Lord, if it be Your will..."
 - Release them into God's hands
4. **Heart check for bitterness**
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where you've judged God unfairly
 - If needed, repent for viewing God negatively
 - Choose to trust His goodness even when you don't understand

Reflection Exercise (10-15 minutes)

Silent Reflection: Give everyone a few minutes of quiet to consider these questions:

- Do I have unmet expectations that have affected my faith?
- Have I been serving God for what I can get from Him?
- What does it look like for me to worship Him for who He is this week?

Optional Sharing: Allow those who feel comfortable to share their reflections.

Prayer Time

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **Repentance** - For times we've judged God unfairly or served Him only for what we could receive
2. **Surrender** - Laying down our unmet expectations and trusting His will
3. **Recognition** - Asking God to help us see Jesus as the true King, not just a miracle worker
4. **Gratitude** - Thanking God for who He is, regardless of circumstances

Prayer Method:

Consider breaking into pairs or smaller groups to pray for one another, especially for those struggling with disappointment or unmet expectations.

Looking Ahead

Next week is Resurrection Sunday! Come prepared to celebrate what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection. Consider inviting someone who needs to hear about the true King.

Closing Thought

"When unmet expectations come, they can lead to bad decisions, depression, and feeling unworthy. But in the midst of all this, maintain an attitude of gratitude. Stand before the Lord and say, 'You love me. You've got me in Your hand, oh God.'"

Additional Resources

- **For further study:** Read all four Gospel accounts of the Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19)
 - **Worship focus:** Psalm 27, Proverbs 3:5-6
 - **On expectations:** James 4:13-17
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