

Our Place at His Place

Dis Appointment

November 8, 2020

Welcome to where we're learning how to deal with major disappointments .. with the Lord!

Have any recent expectations of Jesus? Is He living up to 'em? Don't you just hate it when Jesus disappoints you? Well deal with it! **He disappoints people a lot.** It's true. Jesus can be very disappointing; because, well, I'll let *Him* tell you in His *own* words:



For My thoughts are not your thoughts, **[which we can fix by making our way through His Word; but]** neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways *higher* than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. – Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV

Turns out, **it's literally my way or the High Way.** You see, not only are *His* ways perfect, but **He's stubbornly opposed to compromising our eternal best** – especially for temporary relief down here – and especially since **proper disciplinary pain brings growth and gain.**

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as His children. – Hebrews 12:7 NIV

Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline – Job 5:17 NIV

Do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, – Proverbs 3:11-12 NIV

We are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned – 1 Corinthians 11:32 NIV



Disappointment and discipline go hand in hand. And one of the big eternal reasons for that is because **we can't learn to trust Dad without being disappointed.** My favorite hidden story in the Gospels and Acts is about the disappointment of Jesus' appointment of Judas. And it begins on a hillside above the Sea of Galilee.

[Jesus] spent the night praying to God. **[That's some serious praying! Because this is serious decision making!]** When morning came, He called His disciples to Him **[Luke says it's a great multitude of disciples (Lk 5:17)]** and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, **Judas son of James, [Everyone's like: "Phew! For a second there I thought He was gonna say Judas Iscariot!"]** and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. – Luke 6:12-16 NIV

Everyone who *knew* Jesus' last pick must've been like: "*He* gets a rose?! Why's the biggest jerk always get the last rose?!" It was no secret that Judas could be a real jerk. He threw a tantrum and yelled at a woman for anointing *Jesus* at a dinner in Jesus' *honor*, at which Judas was a guest?!



Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray Him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. **[And for some reason, Jesus put up with it!]** “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. – John 12:4-7 NIV

You can’t hide that kind of selfish nature. So, imagine the second-guessing and whispering going on back on that hillside when Jesus announced His last pick. Especially when there was literally a multitude to choose from – and one standout in particular, who had every right to be very hopeful, if not confident, that Jesus would announce his name. But He didn’t. But, I’ll let you in on a secret: **Judas was a place holder**. And **Peter wasn’t picked first**. So imagine this disappointed, if not devastated, utterly deserving disciple **waiting in vain to hear his name**.



How could he have possibly imagined that *he’s* the one who’s specifically, prophetically, referred to in PSALM 69:25 & 109:8? We’ll look at it later. Yet **despite his disappointment** at the dis of this appointment, **he remains true to the bitter end** – which is, of course, why *he’s* the one foretold to come. His name’s Matt. And, you know what he’s got? **Heart. Passion. Devotion.**

All night Jesus considers His large crowd of followers, looking for those three things. Heart. Passion. Devotion. **Would you have been chosen?** All night He’s determining who has the determination to carry on when He’s gone. And most importantly, **who’ll remain true when He sorely disappoints them**, when they realize He’s not going to overthrow the Romans, or reinstate the Jewish Nation, or their other many assumptions about what the Messiah would do. Who’ll remain true? Will you? He needs *eleven* who *will*, despite great disappointment; and *one* who *won’t*. Because, *he’s* foretold too.



And back when Jesus is baptized, Matt’s right there. **Unsung, unmentioned**, and completely **unaware**. But, *wherever* Jesus can be found, **this unassuming disciple is serving from the sidelines**. In fact, remember when the twelve woke Jesus in the boat on the Sea of Galilee during the storm? “Don’t you care?!” Well ...



Other *little* boats were also with Him. – Mark 4:36 NKJ

So when Jesus calmed the winds and waves and utterly amazed the terrified Twelve, Matt was there. He just had to sit at the kids’ boat. He’s in the shadows in *every* story involving Jesus and the Twelve. Seriously. Not making this up.



And maybe most importantly, he’s at the Capernaum synagogue, when Jesus, after sending out seventy more who swore their allegiance, had to give His great multitude of disciples a dose of reality. And He didn’t mince His disappointing words.

Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” ... On hearing it, many of His *disciples* said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” ... Jesus had known from the *beginning* which of them did not believe and who would betray Him. ... From this time *many* of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. – John 6:53, 60, 64, 66 NIV

It’s all about **expectations versus aspirations**. It’s good to aspire to achieve, or accomplish, or produce something; it’s not so good to expect it to turn out the way you expect (especially when it comes to people). **Aspirations can rise above disappointment**; but, **disappointment drowns expectations dead**. Jesus chose eleven young men with aspirations, and one with expectations. So I’ll ask again: **what are your expectations of Jesus?**



Know the biggest difference between aspirations and expectations? White knuckles. Holding on too tight. Make your knuckles white and look at ‘em. Know what you can’t do with white knuckles? Open up to receive something ... *unexpected*. So deal with it! And **stop expecting and start aspiring**. Heart. Passion. Devotion.

In moments of great disappointment we’ll either **call God’s faithfulness into doubt** or **double-down on our own faithfulness** that He is always good, and His ways are always right. And when the dust settled from the stampede out of the Synagogue, there weren’t that many left.

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.” [And somewhere, out of the limelight, Matt said, “Me to.” And meant it with all his heart] Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? [Which could sound to Matt like: “I have not chosen you”] Yet one of you is a devil!” [Huh?!] (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, [temporarily] was later to betray him.) – John 6:67-71 NIV

Jesus *had* indeed chosen His tried and true twelve. He just hadn’t told anyone who His last – or rather, first – choice had been. So, when He proclaims His pride in His pick, I’ll bet He had His eye on the one and only seemingly unchosen guy standing just outside the story, being tried like no other on Jesus’ first string. And there’s no way he would’ve had ears to hear what Jesus really just said: “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” So, who’s He referring to as His chosen twelve? I mean, since He “had known from the beginning”.



After His resurrection, His chosen replacement is one who’d been with Him from the beginning of John’s baptism. (Acts 1:21-24) Matt was faithful from the beginning to the end. Through thick and thin. Through Jesus’ betrayal and trial, and Judas Iscariot’s suicide, and Christ’s crucifixion, and the unimaginable disappointment on Saturday morning. But on Sunday night ...



Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those [women] who had seen Him – Mark 16:14 NIV

Does that seem right? “**Eleven**”? Obviously Judas wasn’t there. And “doubting” Thomas wasn’t. ‘Cause when he heard, he doubted. Well, **What critics call a contradiction, Christ calls concealed**. Just before Jesus appeared, the two on the road to Emmaus returned to the upper room with an eye witness account. And ...

They found the *Eleven* and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” **[As in, Peter]** – Luke 24:33-34 NIV



Tiger & Turtle Walking Roller Coaster

Can you imagine the emotional roller coaster these guys were on?! Thursday, He’s the **Son of the living God**. Friday, He’s **dead and buried**. Saturday, **they’re mourning**. Sunday morning, **His body’s missing**. Sunday night, He’s back! **Alive!** And **they’re stunned ... and stupefied ... and terrified ... and overjoyed ... and rebuked** (you know, disciplined) ... **and enlightened** ... and led out to watch Him ascend into Heaven.

Ever feel tossed about despite being grounded in Christ? Well, whether it’s Saturday mourning or stunned-day night, hang on for your life; because, **what we lack in the highs we learn in the lows**. And as the pain lessens and goes, **we get to keep those lessons forever**. *If* we learned ‘em.

So what’d Jesus and Peter talk about? I mean *besides* Peter’s regret and repentance for denying Jesus those three times. Well, thanks to Luke, we know *one* of the subjects that was covered.

In those days **[after Jesus ascended]** Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas ... in the book of Psalms, **[69:25]** ‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, **[109:8]** ‘May another take his place of leadership.’ **[That’s pretty astute for ol’ Peter; I’m guessing he had some direction]** Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us **[on the night He appeared to His Eleven]**. For one of *these* must *become* a witness with us of His resurrection.” So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias **[also known as Matt]**. Then they prayed, “Lord, You know everyone’s heart. **Show us which of these two You have chosen** to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they **cast lots**, **[An OT practice of writing options on stones, putting ‘em in a jar, and casting one out to allow the Lord to make the decision]** and the lot fell to Matthias; so **he was added to the eleven** apostles. – Acts 1:15-26 NIV



Even though Jesus had His 11th man present that night, He’d only revealed that it was one of these two. Afterwards **they had to cast lots to reveal His will**. WHY?! Why not just *tell* Peter which one He chose? Why put the runner-up through this process? Because they *needed* to cast lots. Know how we know? Jesus *made* ‘em cast lots! And there *needed* to be a minimum of two to do it.

Really? Just *roll* the dice? *That’s* how we do? *No*. *That’s* how they *did*. In the Old Testament.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. [YHWH, the highest, personal, divine name of the Old Testament God of Israel] – Proverbs 16:33 NIV

Oh LORD/YHWH ... deal with each man according to all he does, since You know his heart (for You [YHWH] *alone* know the hearts of all men), – 1 Kings 8:39 NIV

And, what'd they pray to *Jesus* when they cast those lots? "Lord, You know everyone's heart". Some commentators question the disciples' casting lots. Wow; do *they* miss what's going on! This OT method was established and instructed by YHWH; (Lev 16:8) and employed sparingly by His priests. And **the last casting of lots** (a system used *exclusively* by YHWH to reveal *His* will) **is used by Jesus to reveal *His* will**. A week later He appears to all *Twelve* and breathes His Holy Spirit into them, (Jn 20:26, 20:22) thus ending the need for conveying YHWH's thoughts through lots.

I'd love to know what Jesus said to Matt at *that* meeting. Maybe something like, "You know you were My *first* choice, right? I knew it when I had King David write about it. And, ready for a mind blower? You grew up reading about you right now! I knew who you'd be. And I knew I'd have to choose a Judas. And I was confident *you* could take the disappointment. Well done."

Even when you have heart, passion, and devotion, **Jesus will disappoint you**. Because, His ways are just higher, and greater, and far more eternal. So, stop expecting the Lord to follow *your* ways, and loosen your grip, and open up, and double down, and deal with it, and receive whatever unexpected twists and turns He has in store for *your* story.