

## SET CRAZY EXPECTATIONS

As long as I can remember I have loved the game of basketball. I played basketball in high school, very briefly in college, and for all five years of my time as an active duty airman winning the Pacific Air Command championship while being stationed in Yokota, Japan. During my basketball career I have always been five foot nothing, no more than about 120 pounds. I don't fit the expectations one might have for a competitive basketball player. Once my playing days were over, I went on to coach basketball. Over a 30-year time period I coached anywhere from my children's YMCA teams to a minor league professional men's team but most of my time was spent coaching inner-city high school boys through ministry outreach at the church I was attending. Needless to say that most of the young men who played on the team towered over me. I will never forget the look I would get from every single young man (over 600 over the 15 year time period) when he would first meet me at try outs realizing that instead of the man standing next to me who was the church elder that gave the Bible lesson, they would have to take direction from this five foot nothing woman. I was definitely not what they were expecting. God gave me a gift and a passion for basketball which allowed me to play and coach. As a player and a coach I went into every season expecting to win it all regardless of the team I was working with. Looking at my physical stature, some of the players I had, some might have said those were crazy expectations. I learned early in life that when I tap into faith there is no such thing as crazy expectations when it comes to God. As we heard last week, nothing is impossible for God.

In today's Gospel we read that John sends his disciples to ask Jesus if he is the one they have been waiting for or should they expect another. Jesus' response is classic. He says, go tell John what you have seen. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised. Jesus is saying, tell him if what you see, what you have witnessed, is consistent with what he was expecting. You see, the Messiah the people were expecting was going to be a might warrior, according to the description given by Isaiah. They expect a king that would deliver them from the rule of the Roman Empire. They were not expecting a carpenter's son. Was Jesus what John and the people expected? Probably not. The Jesus asks the people whether John the Baptist was who they expected him to be? He asks them what they expected to see when they went out to meet John in the wild? A sheik in silk pajamas? A prophet? Jesus confirms to the people that they did see a prophet, but not just any prophet, but a prophet that is greater than any other prophet! The people might expect that Jesus is holding John up to be pretty special but surely they could not have expected what Jesus said next. Jesus told them that as great as John is he comes second to the person with the least value in God's kingdom. Crazy! The person with the least value in God's kingdom is greater than the one the scripture was written about, the one who would announce the coming of God's Son! No one would have expected that but that is exactly the way God works and because God is the Master of the unexpected, we can dream big and set crazy expectations.

First we need to determine what it is we see. Do we see the ordinary or do we see the extraordinary. Do we see the limitations of what we see or the limitless power of God through the dreams and vision placed in our hearts and minds by the One who

holds the future of all of us. The woman with the bleeding condition thought she knew what she had seen. You see, she had seen many doctors and specialists, and no one could find a cure for her disease. She then heard about how Jesus was healing the sick, causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the leper to be healed, the dead to rise, and she set some crazy expectations! She decided that if she could just touch Jesus' clothes, she would be healed. Crazy! Her expectations translated into faith, and Jesus said, that is what healed her! The leader of the synagogue, Jairus, whose daughter was sick thought he knew what he had seen. You see, his daughter was dying despite his money and prestige. He recognized true authority in Jesus and decided to set some crazy expectations! He told Jesus he recognized true authority and if Jesus would just lay his hands on Jairus' daughter, he knew she would be healed. Jairus was told that his daughter had already died, he though he knew what he had seen but Jesus told him have some crazy expectations! Those expectations caused Jairus to continue walking with Jesus until they arrived at the home where his daughter lay and watched as Jesus took her by the hand and raised her from a death bed. In the early church Peter met a disabled beggar at the gate of the Temple called the Beautiful Gate who would ask for money daily from the people entering the Temple. When he asked Peter for money Peter instructed him to look at him. The man thought he knew what he was seeing. Peter was just a man, there was nothing special about him. The man expected Peter to give him some money. Peter instead gave him the gift of healing. Crazy! That man should have set some crazy expectations from Peter!

We serve a Risen Lord! We serve the baby born in a manger to a teenage mother and a carpenter who was crucified, died, and rose from the dead! When Mary

went to the tomb expecting to find a body but instead found a Risen Jesus it changed her expectations. We need to change our expectations from what we think we see and set some crazy expectations! This is God's church! We can't put limits on a limitless God! Let's not rely on what we think we see and box God in with our limited vision of what can be. Let's give our vision to our limitless God and watch God take the ordinary and make it extraordinary! Let's set some crazy expectations and watch God do exceedingly and abundantly more than we could ever imagine or ask for! Amen!