

March 23 – 24, 2024

Palm Sunday: Dashed Dreams

Welcome to Palm Sunday weekend. It's the weekend before Easter and the day that marks the start of what we call Holy week and all the events that lead up to Easter. Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus coming back to Jerusalem to a grand reception with the hopes and dreams of becoming a King, just like the greatest king of Israel the people ever had, King David, who reigned 1000 years before Jesus comes on the scene. He ruled as a great military and spiritual leader, and as a King who brought peace to Jerusalem. King David conquered the city of Jerusalem from the non-Hebrew Jebusites, renaming it as the City of David. And for all the people living in Jerusalem when Jesus showed up, those were their dreams and hopes when they celebrated Jesus in that triumphal entry. The people were under harsh political and economic rule from another non-Hebrew kingdom, the Romans who taxed them heavily. And they were also oppressed religiously by another group. Who were they? The Pharisees, the so called religious leaders of the day.

So many had great expectations and high hopes that Jesus would be their savior. Saving them from all their suffering and bringing them peace and prosperity.

This event is mentioned in each of the four books of the gospels. And, I'd like you to watch this scene from the account in the Mark. I figure most of you know the story, so try watch um in my 1st language: You ready: **SHOW VIDEO**.

Do you understand? They shouted, "God goin take us outa da bad kine stuff we stay in, Go goin do plenny good kine stuff for him. God goin give us one King, jalike King David.

Well, we know how the story ends, don't we? Does he become King? Well, not like what they had expected. In fact, days later, their **dreams would be dashed**, ruined. Their King would be put to death! He wouldn't be treated as a king, but as a criminal. He wouldn't rule over the Romans. The Romans ruled over him.

And tonight/today, I want to draw on some lessons from this event for us today. CUZ, we too have great expectations of how Jesus can be our savior today. We have great dreams and hopes of how WE want God to show up and work in our lives too. We hold onto the promises that God wants to give us a full and abundant life. A life of peace and prosperity, loving and lasting relationships. We have dreams of God changing our families for the better. We all wanna live a happy ever after life, don't we? But a Happy-Ever-After life only happens in the world of Disney.

If we reflect upon life, all the things we hope and dream for don't always come true. Life sucks at times. People fail us, we fail ourselves, our bodies fail us, and life has a way of throwing curve balls at us, and tragedy happens, and you live long enough, we'll all face dashed dreams. And what happens when . . .

- The cancer comes back.
- The infertility treatment doesn't work.
- A loved one unexpectedly dies.
- The rebellious teen stays wayward.
- The spouse that walked out, marries their lover.
- Your dream relationship doesn't work out,
- You don't get the job you had hoped fo
- You do lose the house, your business
- Your money investments go sore

- Your retirement plans don't work out
- Healing doesn't come immediately or ever. . .
- Your church and your church leaders let you down. . .

How many of you can relate to this, raise your hands? And I know this is a list of dashed dreams that many of you have gone through. Why? Cuz, they happen within our own church ohana.

Is God still a good God? What about the promises for a full and abundant life? We're just finished a series on Abide, staying tight with Jesus. And I've been abiding in you God, what's up with you or maybe what up with me? Why isn't life better?

And like many in Jesus' time, when Jesus didn't meet up to their expectations of him, they quickly abandoned him. That happens even today. Most people who come to church are looking for a brighter future. Did you check out church cuz everything was going good for you? Probably not, especially if you didn't come from a church background. You checked out church cuz something wasn't going well. You were looking for New Hope, weren't you?

That's why in our pre-marital courses we offer for those looking to get spiritual direction, we emphasize the three rings of marriage. You know the three rings? First get the Engagement Ring, The Wedding Ring, and the third The Suffer Ring. How many of you know all too well that ring? No raise your hands up too high now. And Marriage is a classic situation where not all our expectations and dreams are fulfilled. That's why we emphasize "no foget, get da suffer-ing. Can I get an amen!

And when we don't experience what we hope for? We are tempted to give up on God. We hear preached "Put God first, seek him, abide in him, and you'll have a "better" life, more fruitful life. But some experience a moa "bitter" life. And I'm not saying having a better life isn't the promise, we gotta trust and hold onto the truth that **God gets to define what better means**, in the midst of our "**Bitter**" **circumstances of life. Does that make sense? I think we lose faith cuz we hold onto some lesser dreams.** God is committed to bringing us the greatest joy possible, however such joy is only **found IN Him, not necessarily FROM the stuff we get FROM Him.** I've been meditating on the fact that our all-loving, almighty God, may even cause us to have our most cherished dreams dashed so we will quit hoping in them and find our **true joy** in Him.

There is a story in the bible that illustrates a woman's hopes and expectations of a better life. She finds her husband, gives birth to two boys with the promise that they'd give her and her family a future legacy, but her dreams are dashed. Do you know who I'm talking about? It's the story of Naomi in the book of Ruth. Instead of me telling you the story, **watch this. (2:13 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDmjO7X8ELI> (SHOW VIDEO)**

Likewise, we'll all have our Mara moments, dashed dreams, and unmet expectations where our bitter circumstances make us "Bitter". And like Naomi, we could choose to take on that "Identity" on as "Mr. or Miss Bitter". Do you know people like that?

Ohana Group and Self Reflection Q1: What are some of our dashed dreams, bitter moments, you've had in life? And honestly, how did you cope or are you coping with these moments?

So what's our almighty, all caring, all things possible God's purpose in allowing us to experience in our dashed dreams? You can read the rest of the Ruth's story of how the story ends for both of them. And there's a redeeming ending to this story. No Naomi doesn't get remarried, her son's don't get resurrected to life again, but there is a redemption ending to this story. You go read the ending. And I believe there's a redemption end to all our stories if we hold fast to, and abide in Jesus.

Let me offer this, what if our dashed dreams are God's invitation to experience more of his closeness in our brokenness, maybe that's what he desires more. **That we would build our trust in him as a good good father no matter what difficult circumstances come our way.**

I'll share a couple of my dashed dreams. And subsequent suffering I've been through. What I thought was God's masterplan for my life and my Dreams at different moments of my life.

I had dreams of being recruited and playing college baseball cuz I was a stellar baller? But no one came knocking at my door.

Had dreams of possibly leading a church in my former community or going back to Japan as a long term missionary. And I rose up in leadership with the hopes of their support, then eventually I was asked to step down from all my leadership roles because of a doctrinal difference I had – you ask my wife.

My dad dies before I could show him how I'd parent my son, I don't get to go back to Japan for long term mission work after working hard on my MA in ESL and spending three years there.

And the home of my dreams, I lived on the beach, many of you don't know that. But, I don't get to keep my Ewa Beach, beach house as Gayle wanted to live in a newer community. We weren't rich enough to have two homes at that time.

And even now, the dream of having our church building built upon our property in Mauka, may not happen? That bums me out!

And without going through all the details of those dashed dreams.

Looking back, I had to and have to surrender all those dreams to Jesus. And at many of those moments, I didn't know what God was up to.

If I lived out MY Dreams, I'd either be coaching baseball at a HS, in Japan teaching English and being a missionary, or living on the beach, I'd have my father see me raise and coach my son in baseball.

If someone had told me at that time. Earl, don't you know the promise of God in Romans 8:28, "And we know that **all things work together** for **good** to those who love **God**, to those who are the **called** according to His purpose.

I would have said, shut up. Don't you think I know that promise, but at the moment, I just don't feel like all things are working out for my good!

In the midst of those bitter memories God did something in my life. He built my trust in a Good good Father, who's committed to my maturity in character, and he reminded me that he never left me.

I look back and I'm thankful I didn't hijack God's plans. I could have forced Gayle to Japan, or decided to stay in the DOE to coach at a HS level, been bitter at my father's death, but my father came to know Jesus in his dying days, my mom and brother too. Or I could have stayed in Ewa Beach. I probably wouldn't be here as a pastor today (and become ohana with many of you), and probably I wouldn't get

to lead Hawaii Pidgin Bible Ministries and help complete the translation and have an audio recording and even some video. So as I look back, God had greater plans beyond my dreams, but it took me to have those lesser dreams dashed and cause me to trust God more. We gotta trust that God has way better oversight of our lives than we do. **And I'm so thankful many of my dreams were dashed for me to experience a truly "Better" life today.**

I'd like you to hear a real life story of a couple who had great expectations of raising their family of their dreams, but like I've been talking about, tragedy befalls them. And I want you to hear how they are coping with their dashed dreams and how God is working in their lives.

Testimony of the Kirks

Ohana Group and Self Reflection Q2: What can you glean from the testimony of the Kirk's dashed dream of losing their daughter?

Ultimately, "Our Dashed Dreams" challenges us to draw closer to God and gain new perspective on our disappointment and brokenness. Rather than viewing these moments as signs of failure or defeat, we can embrace our dashed dreams as an invitation for growth, transformation, and alignment with God's will. By embracing our brokenness and surrendering our dashed dreams to God, we can discover a deeper sense of purpose, fulfillment, and joy that surpasses our own limited understanding.

These are some passages of Scripture I've memorized and meditated on to give me perspective when I or others face dashed dreams:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:2 – 4 NIV). **KEYNOTE**

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-12 NIV). **KEYNOTE**

But he tell me, “I do plenny good tings fo you, an dass all you need. My powa mo strong inside you wen you no can handle trouble wit da powa you get.” Az why I goin talk big even moa, cuz get plenny stuff I no can handle. Dass how Christ powa goin stay wit me. 10So den, no bodda me. I still stay good inside, wen I no can handle, wen peopo try make me come shame, wen I get hard time, wen peopo make me suffa, an wen I get plenny presha. All dis stuff happen cuz me, I one Christ Guy. Wen I no can handle, den I get da powa fo handle cuz a him! **(DGASB) Keynote**

3Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
24You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
25Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
26My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:23 – 26 NIV) **Keynote**

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 NIV). **KEYNOTE**

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 NIV). **Keynote**

Ohana Group and Self Reflection Q3: Read and meditate on these scriptural passages and discuss the truths found in here and how they pertain to our dashed dreams. Pray with someone in your OG to surrender your dashed dreams to God and allow God to fill you with his very presence.

We're all gonna experience bitter moments, dashed dreams this side of heaven, but one day everything will be perfect when we see God face to face. Until then, let's choose in those moments to cling to God, and surrender our dreams to his greater plans and purposes for our lives. And trust that God is always there in the midst of our pains and sorrows even if we don't see it or feel it.

Never lose faith in our dashed dreams. Know that God will be with us, actually near to us THROUGH IT ALL.

Before we sing this song, I wanna invite the Prayer team up to usher people to Jesus.

If you are here today and God has spoken to you today, maybe because you have had your own dashed dreams and need prayer to help you face those with a new perspective, please share with one of our prayer team members. They would love to guide you to the One who loves us THROUGH IT ALL.