**Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015,** [**Is 50:4-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+50%3A4-9a&version=NRSV)**;**[**Ps 31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31%3A9-16&version=NRSV)**;**[**Phil 2:5-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A5-11&version=NRSV)**;**[**Mark 14:1-15:47**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14%3A1-15%3A47&version=NRSV)**,**

**Rev. Mary S. Trainor**

Sir Alexander Mackenzie is a Canadian hero, after in 1793 successfully leading the first expedition across Canada from Lake Athabasca (way north of Montana) to the Pacific Ocean. This was 11 years before Lewis and Clark began their famous expedition to the west! Mackenzie had tried this same expedition four years earlier, however, and this trip turned out to be a major disappointment. They had followed a mighty river (now named the Mackenzie) with high hopes, paddling furiously amid great danger. Unfortunately, it didn't empty into the Pacific, but into the Arctic Ocean. In his diary, Mackenzie called it the "River of Disappointment." Today we are going to talk about heroes and disappointment.

When is the last time you were really, really disappointed? Maybe you were excited about going on a fun trip, and then you had to cancel because of work or because someone got sick. Maybe you were excited about getting something new, and then your finances changed and you were unable to get it. We've all experienced disappointment.

We all have our heroes too. A hero is defined as: "**a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities."**  Maybe your hero is a sports figure, like Aaron Rodgers. Maybe your hero is a historical figure like Abe Lincoln or Helen Keller or Nelson Mandela. Or, maybe your hero is a movie star like Angelina Jolee or Tom Cruise. Think about people you consider your heroes. We have certain expectations of our heroes, don't we? And we aren't very patient or tolerant of our heroes letting us down. Mackenzie sure would not be considered a hero in Canada if he had not succeeded in his 2nd expedition.

The people we heard about in both of our Gospel readings this morning, the one in the Hall for Palm Sunday and the Passion Gospel you just heard, were in the midst of experiencing disappointment about their hero, who did not live up to their expectations. These were people who had a rough life, as they were suffering under the oppression of the Roman Empire. In the Palm procession, they were looking to celebrate their hero, Jesus, who many were beginning to see as the Messiah -- but then He rode into town on top of a donkey of all things! They were looking for a great military hero to liberate them, and so their hero would not be riding a donkey -- but rather a great white stallion....but they cheered anyway. Then, the week went on, and they found themselves in the crowd before Pilate. They were disappointed when they saw their supposed hero bloody and beaten before them, wearing a crown of thorns. Imagine what it must have been like to be one of the people in the crowd back then in Jerusalem. Yes, they were looking for a noble hero to pull them out of the muck of life, out of their suffering, and here before them the man they saw could not be their hero after all. So, they got swept up in the mob mentality and cried out "***crucify him, crucify him***."

Disappointment has to do with expectations. They had a certain set of expectations for their hero, and Jesus did not meet those expectations. Oh Jesus is admired now for His courage, but back then during the journey to the cross He was jeered, He was spat upon, and He sure was not idealized for outstanding worldly achievements or noble qualities. Imagine what it must have been like to have been in the crowd back then in Jerusalem.

Today is our beginning of Holy Week, and it is a time when we each examine our relationship with Jesus - and try to meet Him again for the first time. Part of this week's necessary pondering is to examine our expectations of Jesus as hero, and our disappointments. Maybe you have prayed earnestly for something, and that prayer was not answered in the way you had wanted. Maybe you pray and pray, and look for God to speak to you in a certain way, and you feel a lot of time that God is silent. Maybe you are experiencing some darkness in your life, and are not sensing the fullness of the Light of Christ.

Whatever your expectations and disappointments are, get in touch with them this week. It is a week when people expect us to spend time at Church, so spend time at Church. It is a week when people expect that we will spend more time in prayer focused on Jesus, so spend more time in prayer focused on Jesus. We have four services during this week, and then Easter Sunday! You won't be disappointed. Amen.