*For 2nd Sunday after Epiphany: January 17, 2021*

Expectations color our view of many things in life. Low expectations prove easy to meet and exceed. But we know that if our expectations run unreasonably high, we set ourselves up for disappointment.

After prophecies that had been issued over thousands of years, by the first century was there anyone who was still expecting the long-promised Messiah? Or had people just given up hope?

Maybe some had given up, but a passage to be read in our church service on Sunday (John 1:43-51) shows that the hope nonetheless remained alive. Philip went to his friend Nathaniel and said, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote” – Jesus of Nazareth.

When Philip brought the skeptical Nathaniel to Jesus, Jesus told Nathaniel, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” That convinced Nathaniel, who said, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Jesus answered, in effect, that Nathaniel had not seen anything yet: “you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” Jesus had come to do more than get miraculous glimpses of people under far-away fig trees. He came to open heaven, to be Himself the bridge between heaven and earth. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Often people acutely feel the need for the Lord’s help with one particular problem, or over one specific sin. Maybe you have felt this way.

If so, widen your expectations! Jesus came to reconcile you to God and give you peace with your Creator. He did this by His own death and resurrection.

Jesus famously taught people to pray, “Thy Kingdom come.” What great expectations!