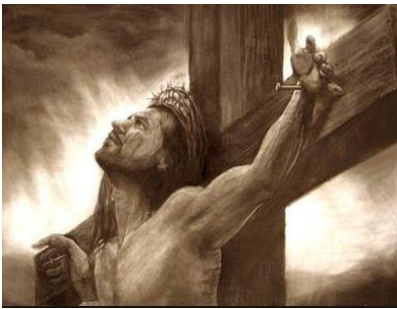


Jealousy, Expectations & the High Road

Catlin Clark is on an exciting but very public ride. Her name is synonymous with women's basketball – initially as the highest-scoring collegiate women's basketball player ever, and now elevating the public interest in the WNBA. Her picture is everywhere and people's expectations are off the chart. She was expected to singlehandedly turn a weak professional team into a championship conversation. Easier said than done. You only need to say the first name and everyone knows who you are talking about. Caitlin was anointed as the savior of the WNBA. Social media hype has led to haters just because of over-saturation. On the WNBA court, Clark has been physically roughed up to test her resolve and toughness. The motivation of naysayers is all over the place. It may be jealousy, ego, doubt, unfulfilled expectations – whatever. Sportswriters play up any real or imagined controversy just to increase the hype. It is a "bandwagon," and everyone wants on it. The WNBA tried to cash in on the sensation by scheduling her team with frequent early season games against the strongest teams in the league. It is a recipe for a big letdown because of unrealistic expectations.



As Jesus' ministry public progressed, His popularity skyrocketed. Jesus had his detractors, too. Even though He performed miracles, people doubted his divine heritage. They questioned if anything good could come out of the little community of Nazareth. On top of that, He was the son of a lowly carpenter. People expected royalty rather than a humble servant. The religious leaders of the time were jealous of Jesus' growing popularity, and political leaders were afraid that He would take away their crown and power. Pilate mocked Him as "King of the Jews." Large crowds gathered wherever He went. He even found a way to feed 5,000 with mere scraps of food. He was known by His first name. People felt his healing power just by touching His cloak. As Holy Week approached, the story was building up to a crescendo. People had their own expectations of what Jesus would do for them. Their agenda was for him to overthrow the oppressive rulers. Their agenda wasn't His agenda. When they found Jesus to be passive and to seek peace and repentance, the crowd turned on Him. He was physically beaten, yet He never yielded. The crowds who once cried out "Hosanna" (save us) turned on Him and later demanded Pilate to "Crucify Him."



It is human nature to bash heroes who threaten agendas, have different goals, or don't meet our expectations. While I am not placing a women's basketball player in the same league as our Lord and Savior, there are some parallels in how some people sought to discredit them both. When we bash others, we are seeking to put ourselves and our agenda above theirs. Catlin Clark came on the scene with the possibility of being the best women's basketball player ever. Her success is a threat to some people who want the attention and recognition Caitlin is receiving. Jesus came to us as God's Son to teach us how to live and to die for our sins. He came to change the world. He is a threat to Satan and people who desire public approval of their unbiblical choices. While some people will never accept Jesus' offer of eternal life, our role is to be followers, share the Good News with those who will listen, and grow the Kingdom. Jesus met the Lord's expectations. Accept the Lord's ways as the best way, and trust Him.

In public interviews, Caitlin Clark has treated her detractors with amazing grace, working hard to make her team successful. She takes the "high road." Jesus Christ has treated us with Amazing Grace, winning eternal life for us – God's expectation. His way is "the high road."

The Bible Says: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, 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). Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).*