

Expectations

Prayer

Good Morning,

I'd like to speak to you all this morning about expectations.

What is an expectation?

Def'n:

- A belief that something will happen or is likely to happen
- A feeling or belief about how successful, good or bad, someone, something or some event will be

When you came here this morning were you expecting to hear the preacher drone on or did you come with an expectation to hear the word of the Lord?

I believe that the outcome of many events, and circumstances in our lives are affected by our expectations.

It is my sincere hope this morning that I will not be droning on.

Let's take a look at an example of expectation: Let's consider a reunion... When a person goes to a reunion with the expectation that they will be criticized for their life choices; when they feel that when they attend they will be judged as successful or a failure. There is often an apprehension about going to the event because they have set inside themselves an expectation that criticism and judgment will occur.

Because they have allowed this expectation inside themselves, they will be either consciously or sub-consciously looking for that criticism and judgment to occur. They will essentially be sensitive to it. Their expectation almost guarantees that they will find the offense they are looking for. One might even say that the results declare the intent under which the person participated.

Ever hear anyone talk about a self-fulfilling prophecy?

We go through our lives with varying expectations all the time...

What kind of expectations do we approach our church with?

What expectations do we have of our heavenly Father?

Bruce Lee the famous martial artist once said: "I'm not in this world to live up to your expectations and you're not in this world to live up to mine..."

Folks, do we set our expectations based upon how we think we will be perceived?

Jodi Picoult once said: "If you spent your life concentrating on what everyone else thought of you, would you forget who you really were? What if the face you showed the world turned out to be a mask... with nothing underneath it?"

Wow, harsh but we need to ask do we try to set others expectations of us to be accepted... at the cost of who we really are?

Brian Tracy said: "An Attitude of positive expectation is the mark of the superior personality"

I like this because it raises the question: Do we approach things with a positive or a negative expectation?

A positive expectation is the direct result of faith and a negative expectation is the result of fear, your intention sets your expectation, do you intend to succeed? - Ray Green (☺)

Here is some food for thought... Do you think that people ever act in accordance with our expectations of them?

Now I want to change gears here...

What is our expectation of the almighty God; the creator of the universe?

Turn with me to Ephesians 3:20 NIV

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Have we set our expectations of the God we serve in such a way that we truly believe that he will strengthen us with power? Do we have the expectation in our hearts that he is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine?

Why does the world and why do even churches have such a low expectation of what God can do and what can be accomplished today?

Well... As we look to the word of God for answers, what does God show us in his divine revelation about expectations?

In Genesis 39-50 we see that Joseph had a desire to be free from slavery. So what happened to him? ... He wound up in prison didn't he? That would kind of be hard on his faith in God wouldn't it? Have you ever felt like you placed your trust in God and your situation actually seemed to get worse?

Well, God had a plan and Joseph ended up second in command of the land of Egypt.

Friends, can you see here that God delivered way beyond expectation...

How about 2 Kings 6:34-7:20?

What do we have here?

Samaria is suffering a famine and is under siege by Ben-Hadad, King of Aram. Food became so scarce that a dead donkey head sold for 80 Shekels... What is that in today's terms?

Well... Let's say that an ounce of silver varies but is about \$20. A shekel is about ½ an ounce so \$800...

It was so bad they talked of eating each other's children...

Four lepers were so distraught in their situation that they could see nothing but death regardless of what they did about their situation, so they decided to try to surrender to the invading army.

God had other plans...

The Syrians left behind their resources. Food and wealth to hide...

2 Kings 7:5-7

At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there, for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!" So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives

God turned an impossible situation around in a way that was beyond anything they could have imagined...

How many times in history have people underestimated what God can do and found fear and suffering in their low expectations.

Luke 15:11-24

Here we see the prodigal son taking his share of the wealth of his family. He flitted it all away on wine, woman and song. Like that doesn't happen today right? His situation turned bad, his expectations low, the slop fed to the pigs was better than what he was eating. He sets his expectation of his father that maybe, just maybe he will be accepted back as a servant and improve his lot. But his father welcomed him back with a robe, ring and shoes. He celebrated with a banquet. He was accepted back as a son, which entitled him to a full share in the inheritance once again.

If this isn't a picture of God's grace, I don't know what is. God has given us, so much, yet some backslide. God opens his arms and welcomes them back as sons and daughters.

God delivered this young man back into right standing with his family far above his expectations...

Next consider John 6:1-14

What's going on here?

Jesus feeds 5000 people with nothing more than 5 loaves and 2 fish. Not only that but there are 12 baskets full of leftovers...

God delivered far beyond expectation of the people who were there. He provided for the hungry people in abundance.

How about Acts 3:1-10

As we press into these scriptures we see a lame man at the gates of the temple begging. All he wants is some alms. Some money. His expectation is that maybe he will be given something to ease his suffering financially. Yet God delivers to him the ability to walk...

By this point I hope you see that we as a species have habitually set our expectation of what God can do and does, far lower than what he actually does.

Today, I challenge you his children to embrace his vision, to not underestimate what God is doing in your lives and in your community. God has this...

So... Think on these things:

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 3:20,21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen
Ever consider that our God created the universe...

Great concept eh?

Well considering that the Voyager space probe is travelling through space at 61,155 km/h and it has taken about 35 years just to cross our solar system, it starts to put our God into perspective...

Psalms 147:4

He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name

So here is my sermon...

Why is the modern church struggling with walking in the power and authority as given to Jesus and under which authority he has said we would do even greater things?

I believe it is because many Christians have accepted a worldly expectation of what our God is capable of. They have become convinced that he is not everything that His word says He is...

The world has a saying: "Those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it..." Today we have seen several examples from scripture history. Note that this has NOT been a comprehensive list. Yet, we consistently see mankind setting a low expectation on God.

God will always deliver.

The question today is do we accept this as the human condition or do we look to the new creations in Christ Jesus that we have become and choose to place our faith in the one who can deliver way beyond our expectations. Let us not allow sin, worldliness, unbelief, doubt or confusion rob us of who we are and more importantly who our Heavenly Father is...

Let us today embrace the blood of Jesus, the mighty name of Jesus and accept his great work at the cross.

I want to be his servant, but I want to be an anointed, empowered servant of my Jesus of whom nothing is impossible. I want to set my expectation in accordance with what my God can accomplish, NOT what I have been programmed by our culture to accept.

My friends, I once saw a sermon; wherein, the minister broke a scripture out to emphasize what it truly means. Let's do this with Ephesians 3:20.

Ephesians 3:20 KJV

Today, I ask you to consider that Jesus is:

- Able
- Able to do
- Able to do exceedingly
- Able to do exceedingly abundantly
- Able to do exceedingly abundantly above all
- Able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask
- Able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think

Ephesians 3:21

*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.
Amen*

So let's set our expectations in accordance with God's mighty will and his divine plan for Crossroads...

I conclude with these subsequent words from the Apostle Paul From Ephesians 4:14

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

Prayer