

“Filled With Expectation”

Scripture: Luke 3:15-22

Graphics: water, baptism

Big Truth: We all have expectations. Many times, those expectations are not met in the ways that we anticipate. That leaves us discouraged and even bitter. The people that were anticipating the Messiah were filled with expectations about John the Baptist and Jesus. Their expectations were met in a very different way from what they were anticipating. For followers of Jesus, our expectations are met in Jesus alone. What are YOUR expectations?

Focus Phrase: Only Jesus meets the expectations of my heart and life.

1. Introduction

- A. **Pray! (Jesus you are Lord...)**
- B. Expectations! We all have them. Most of the time we don't even know that we operate from a series of expectations at all times. Some are realistic. Others are not.
- C. An expectation is defined as, **“...a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.”** Expectations are ALWAYS about the future. We don't ever expect something to change in the PAST. Expectations are about the future...what is to come.
- D. Some simple examples: we expected that when we arrived here this morning, the heat would be on, the coffee would be ready, our Sunday School teachers would be prepared, and the worship team would be ready to lead us in worship. Those expectations have been or are being met...Praise God! If any of those haven't been met, then there might be some disappointment right now.
- E. When I went away on vacation last week, my expectation was that the worship team and Pastor Tim would lead the worship service and he would preach a great bible-based message. My expectations were not only met, but exceeded! Praise God again!
- F. But our expectations are not always so identifiable or easily met or exceeded. We get ourselves into lots of struggle and pain because our expectations aren't met. Many times, other people don't meet our expectations and that causes relationship struggles or leads to anger. Other times, we have expectations about ourselves or our circumstances, and those aren't met.
- G. We all have been following what happened during the Monday Night Football game between the Bills and the Bengals. We expected that the game would be a good one...yet, we ended the night praying for a young man who has been struggling with the most basic life-sustaining tasks. Expectations are what we fully believe will happen...but life changes in an instant.
- H. As we begin this New Year, it's a good time to talk about our expectations as followers of Jesus. On the Christian calendar, this Sunday is Baptism of the

Lord Sunday. It's the day when we spend some time in worship reading about the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. That event was the very beginning of the public ministry of Jesus...filled with expectation and future hope.

- I. That event led to a chain of events over the next three years, outlined in the four gospels. It started with Jesus calling the disciples. It led to the miracles He performed, the teaching He did, and the amazing ways that Jesus invited everyone He met into a saving relationship with the Father. Eventually, his baptism led to his death, resurrection, and ascension.
- J. We know all those things because they are in the past and recorded for us in the Bible, which we trust. The people who were waiting for the Messiah to be revealed in the first century didn't have the gospels. They didn't know those things were going to occur in the way we know they did. They were filled with expectation that SOMETHING was happening. They had, "...a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future." God had promised it. The prophets foretold it. And there was a guy named John the Baptizer, who was a little strange, but he was preaching a message about repentance and preparing the way for the Messiah.
- K. The people were FILLED with EXPECTATION. We know that some of their expectations were met in ways they didn't understand or believe. Some were false expectations that could never be met. BUT, we also know that EVERY expectation for God's future for humanity was met IN JESUS CHRIST...the One who would come.
- L. So, as we move into this New Year, I ask us this morning: "What are YOUR expectations?" Are you expecting everything in your family, work, community, and church to work out just how you want it to...maybe in your own strength and planning? Or are you ready for more...for Jesus alone to meet every expectation of your heart and life?
- M. If you're taking notes, write this down: **Only Jesus meets the expectations of my heart and life.**
- N. I pray you've brought your bible with you. Let's open our Bibles to Luke chapter 3. The first 14 verses are all about John the Baptizer, Jesus' cousin (the son of Mary's cousin Elizabeth that she visited before Jesus was born).
- O. John's message to the people was a message of repentance - of turning from sin and turning toward God. John's ministry was a ministry of preparation - anticipation - for the public ministry of Jesus, the Son of God and Messiah for the Jewish people.
- P. As the people listened to John and were being baptized throughout the region of the Jordan River in Israel, the anticipation that something big was happening began to grow and grow.

Q. Let's pick up the scene in Luke 3, starting in verse 15...

2. Scripture

A. READ Luke 3:15-20

- i. "As the people were filled with expectation..." In some powerful ways, that very moment was the pivot point when John's ministry had to decrease so that Jesus' ministry could increase. It's a pregnant moment of not knowing what will come next, but hoping it'll be good!
- ii. Now, we don't really know what the people - the crowds - were expecting. From other parts of the gospel, we know that they expected the Messiah to come. They expected that the Romans would be defeated and that the Jewish people would be a nation on their own again. Maybe even that John was the Messiah who would lead them in that! Yet, they were questioning that in their hearts, Luke tells us.
- iii. John, however, was very clear that not all of their expectations were God's plan for them. John was NOT the Messiah - yet, the Messiah was coming. In fact, John said that the One who would come after him was more powerful...that John was not even worthy to untie the thong of the sandals of the One to come. They SHOULD expect that John would decrease and Jesus would increase.
- iv. The people must've looked at each other with some confusion at that point. See, whenever our expectations are not met or they are challenged, it causes some angst or confusion in our lives. But John wasn't done...he also proclaimed that:
 - a. The Messiah was not coming to defeat Rome, but to bring the power of the Holy Spirit and bring FIRE to the hearts of the people of God.
 - b. The Messiah was not coming to make everything in their lives perfect, but to set the record straight about what GOD expects from them.
 - c. The Messiah would be the one who would judge the world, dividing good and evil for eternity.
- v. Every expectation they had was being re-oriented to point to the real plan - the real Messiah - who was Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- vi. As this reorientation was taking place, John kept on preaching and teaching and baptizing, Luke tells us in verse 18. That is, until Herod had John thrown in prison because he was threatened by John's message...and, from other gospel accounts, later had John beheaded.
- vii. Our scene then turns to the One who was to come...Jesus. Let's look at the final two verses...

B. READ Luke 3:21-22

- i. This is a very shortened version of the baptism of Jesus in other gospels... there we read that John welcomed Jesus to the Jordan River and Jesus went down into the waters to be baptized by John.
- ii. When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened up and God proclaimed over Him that He was His Son, the Beloved...and that the Father was pleased with Him.
- iii. Talk abbot expectations! I don't know about you, but my parents had lots of expectations for me growing up. They were all mostly fair and clear to me. Even so, I didn't always live up to all of them. I made some conscience decisions to not follow the rules. My parents were disappointed in some of my choices. Yet, they never stopped loving me.
- iv. We know that when God sent the incarnate Jesus to come and live amongst us, that assignment came with a very clear set of expectations for Jesus.
- v. It's good for us to know that right at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, the Creator of the Universe had these tender loving words to the incarnate Son of God. "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."
- vi. And (here's the point...ready?) **Jesus perfectly fulfilled every expectation of the Father. Every ONE! Perfectly!**
 - a. He walked throughout the region, calling disciples to help Him get God's message of salvation and hope out to everyone who would listen.
 - b. He performed miracles that blow our minds - feeding thousands, casting out demons, healing the sick and lame, restoring sight to the blind... even raising people from the dead!
 - c. Jesus confronted the misplaced expectations of the culture which desired a military Messiah. He confronted the religious establishment who made an idol of the Law, instead of calling people to be holy in their hearts and lives.
 - d. He was accused of blasphemy and inciting riots, threatening the status quo.
 - e. He humbled himself, was arrested, beaten, tortured, brought before both the Roman and Jewish authorities - subjected to lies and false accusations. Yet, He never said a word in His own defense.
 - f. He was hung on a Roman cross for God's ultimate purpose of taking on the full weight of the sin of the world.
 - g. He was placed in an empty tomb for three days and then walked out of that grave, raised from the dead in his own power.

- h. He would then show himself to the disciples and many others, ascend back to heaven from whence he came, and he is TODAY, reigning over the universe as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! (great place for an amen!)
- vii. Jesus IS the complete fulfillment of every one of God's expectations for the salvation of this world!
- viii. The question that I've been asking myself this week is this: "Why in the world do I place any of my expectations in ANYTHING other than the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?"
- ix. We're so tempted to be filled with expectations for others, or our leaders, or our spouses, or our church, or ourselves. And so often, our expectations are not met, under met, or misplaced all together.
- x. Yet, (here's the good news) every time we place our hope and trust in the Lord, and anticipate what He is doing in this world and in our lives, **He meets every expectation!**

3. Application

- A. And if you're not yet convinced, here are a few expectations you can 100% count on as we follow Jesus together...and these will never go unmet in Jesus:
 - i. You can expect **transformation from death to life**
 - a. John said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - b. The Holy Spirit fills every believer with the power to be changed from a trajectory of death to a trajectory of life. In Ephesians chapter 2, we read this: "You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."
 - c. In our Methodist baptism vows, we read these words: "Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price."
 - d. Jesus meets your expectation to be transformed from death to life...from sin to holiness.
 - ii. #2 - You can expect **trouble in this life**

- a. Well, that's encouraging, right? But Jesus said, "I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution, but take courage: I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33)
 - b. John the Baptizer was an expectant follower of Jesus...but was thrown in jail and eventually beheaded.
 - c. You and I can expect to face troubles and persecution in this world. We can count on it. Yet, Jesus has faced every bit of it before us and is facing it with us now! And so our expectation for trouble is then met as Jesus stands with us and gives us peace when trouble comes.
- iii. #3 - You can expect **true significance in Jesus**
- a. Most of us have asked at one point in our lives: "Why am I here? What's the meaning of this life?"
 - b. The answer Jesus gives to us is quite simple. It's an answer that the world doesn't understand...and that causes great material and social striving after the next thing that will dull, delay, or destroy the pain of not having significance.
 - c. The answer to the meaning of life is to **bring glory to the one who made you and saved you**. To do what He commands and worship and serve Him.
 - d. You can expect to have significance in your life when you do that.
 - e. With Jesus, you are beloved...and God is pleased when you try to please Him. Jesus meets your expectation for significance.
- iv. #4 - You can expect **a future with hope**
- a. John said, someone greater is coming who I am unworthy to serve. That wasn't his way of admitting that he was worthless. That was John's way of saying, "Folks, this is about to get VERY VERY good!"
 - b. In Revelation 21, in a vision of Jesus speaking from His throne in heaven, He promised this, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and be their God; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."
 - c. Jesus died on the cross to defeat the power of sin in your life. Jesus rose from the grave to defeat the power of death in your life. Church, in Christ, you can expect everlasting life.
 - d. That expectation is 100% fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- v. Finally, you can expect to **never be alone**

- a. Just like the affirmation that the Father gave to the Son at his baptism, you and I are never outside the grace and love of the Father.
- b. When Jesus left earth before he ascended back to heaven he said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- c. Expect to never be alone. Jesus meets that expectation.

4. Conclusion

- A. So what ARE your expectations? Are they in the people and systems of this world? If so, ask yourself if and how those expectations have been met in the past year? Ever?
- B. Jesus is inviting us to take decrease the expectations we have in the things of this world, and increase our expectations we have for and in Him alone.
- C. We can be filled with expectations for what we think is happening in our lives, but it isn't until we surrender our lives to Jesus that the true expectations of our hearts and lives are met.
- D. Jesus IS the Messiah. He IS the Savior. He IS the Lord.
- E. In HIM, every expectation is met...exceeded!
- F. The world needs to hear THAT hope.
- G. Get out there and share those expectations with the world!
- H. **Only Jesus meets the expectations of my heart and life!**
- I. Let's pray...