



## EXPECTANT FAITH

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[Lk18-31-43]

Have you ever wondered what makes one person open to what God wants to say to them, while another person is very closed to what God wants to say to them?

You can imagine two people, Susie and Sarah, sitting next to one another in church on Sunday. And as they sit there, they hear the same message, the same songs. They're in the same service. But the response is very different. Sarah is receptive. She's attentive, she's open to what God wants to say to her. And Susie is really closed and apathetic and just sort of bored by everything.

What makes the difference? Why the different response? Well, I think one major factor is this - it's **expectancy**.

If you come with an open heart for God to speak, then you'll hear God speak. On the other hand, if you're not expecting anything from God, then you'll probably experience what you're expecting.

And so, when we have an **expectant type of faith**, God honors that expectancy.

**WHAT IS FAITH?** Let's stop for a moment and define what the Bible means by *faith in God*. Faith/belief – they are often used to simply mean “believe.” “*I believe in God.*”

But when the Bible uses it, it's active. It means *to believe God for something, to trust God to do or be something.*

- “I'm trusting/believing in God to save me and forgive me.”
- “I have faith that God will guide me through this difficulty I'm having.”

That's why I'm calling it Expectant Faith.

### **LOOSING FAITH**

And yet many people in our world today are finding reasons to lose any type of faith in God at all.

Sometimes it's natural things that happen, hurricanes or earthquakes or floods or tornadoes or fires that devastate communities as they sweep through. It can cause people to lose an expectancy and faith in God.

Sometimes it's because of the things that we do to each other - mass murderers attacking shopping malls. Wars and civilians wounded and killed.

And then there are personal issues. Whether it's debt or unemployment or our health or our security - all of those things can cause us to lose our faith.

Studies show that many people have lost their faith in God if they ever have faith to begin with.

Pew Research has done studies on *the NONES* (not nuns). These are the people who self-identify as atheists or agnostics, or who say they just don't have any faith at all.

In a recent Atlantic essay titled “*The True Cost of the Churchgoing Bust*,” columnist Derek Thompson writes that “*more Americans today have ‘converted’ out of religion than have converted to all forms of Christianity, Judaism and Islam combined. No faith's evangelism has been as successful in this century as religious skepticism.*”

*The statistic is that NONES now make up at least 25% of American adults.*

In some sense this article describes another group of people that we might call *the DONES*. These are those people who identify/ied as Christians and maybe grew up in church. And while they may have some good things to say about God or Jesus, they've walked away from the church. They walked away from the Bible. They walked away from any kind of active expectant faith. They're over it. They say “*I'm done.*”

And even if you happen to be a *DONE* or whether you're a *NONE*, or whether you're just going through life and struggling with your faith, here's what I hope and pray you will see today - *God wants us to live every day of our lives with an expectant faith in Jesus Christ, and Jesus will give us the grace so that we can live with expectancy in what He's going to do.*

### **Let's Read Together LUKE 18:31-34**

As we look at this passage I want to talk to you about the first of **four qualities that accompany Expectant Faith** in Jesus Christ. (all important...distorted)

#### **I. [WHAT EXPECTANT FAITH REALIZES]**

The first thing I want you to see in this text is what **expectant faith REALIZES**. Now the Bible tells us that Jesus is getting closer and closer to the city of Jerusalem, and soon he's going to enter the city. And Jesus is telling his disciples ahead of time what is going to happen, and notice what he says. In **verse 31**, he says *everything that is written about the Son of Man and the prophets will be accomplished.*

Jesus calls himself the *Son of Man*. You might want to just underline that phrase, because that's the name that Jesus gave to himself. It wasn't a title that other people gave to him.

And though it may seem sort of counterintuitive to us, **the title Son of Man speaks to the deity and the divinity of Jesus Christ**. It goes back to the Old Testament prophet Daniel, where Daniel had a vision of God, who Daniel called the Ancient Of Days and there in Daniel chapter 7, God, the Ancient Of Days gives authority and glory and sovereign power to the Son Of Man. So when Jesus was calling himself the Son Of Man, he was asserting his own identity, his own sovereignty *as God*.

And so, He says, “*when I get to Jerusalem in just a few days, everything that's been prophesied concerning the Son*

of Man is going to happen.” This was the 3rd explicit statement about his death that Jesus had given his disciples, and this was by far the most specific.

He promised 7 events. What happened to him when he got to Jerusalem? Look in **verse 32**.

- Number one he would be turned over to the Gentiles, first King Herod and then Pilate and then the Roman soldiers.
- Secondly, he would be mocked.
- Thirdly, he would be shamefully treated.
- Fourthly, even more specifically, he would be spit upon

### **Verse 33**

- Five, he would be flogged and beaten with a whip.
- Six, he would be killed,
- And then seventh, miraculously, unexpectedly, He would rise from the dead after the third day. Praise God.

Jesus predicted all of these things about himself and the language that he uses here points even more powerfully to his own sovereignty and power as God. Look at how he says on *the third day he would rise*, Literally, he said in the original language *on the third day he will raise Himself Up*.

Jesus was calling his own shots. He was saying “I’m going to go to Jerusalem and here’s what’s going to happen. And though it may look like other people are in control, I’m going to be in control. And after I have been killed and buried on the third day, I will raise myself up.”

**Expectant Faith is founded on the realization that Jesus Christ can do anything.** Do you realize that Jesus Christ can do anything and He has the power to call his own shots?

The New York Yankees were playing the Chicago Cubs in game 3 of the 1932 World at Wrigley Field in Chicago. Babe Ruth, the home run king, stepped up to the plate to hit for NY. By this time, Babe Ruth was near the end of his career with the Yankees, no longer at the very top of his game.

It was the 5th inning, the score was tied 4 to 4, Babe Ruth took strike one from the Cubs pitcher. The Cubs players and fans were jeering at him, hurling insults at him. And after that first strike, Babe Ruth raised his hand and pointed to the outfield. And then came the next pitch. Strike two. More jeers from the Cubs

And this time, unmistakably, Babe Ruth pointed to the flagpole at center field. On the next pitch came a crack of the bat. Babe Ruth connected, and He hit a towering home run over 440 feet just to the right of that flagpole at center field! The Yankees went crazy, and they wound up winning the game.

Babe Ruth’s home run was spectacular. But what was even more impressive ... He called his shot. He said *I’m going to hit it right there* and then he hit it right there. He did exactly what he said he was going to do.

And in an infinitely more miraculous way Jesus Christ called his shot. He said *I’m going to Jerusalem. I’m going to suffer. And I’m going to die. And then I’m going to raise*

*myself up from the dead, just as it has been prophesied.*

Sadly, as we read, although expectant faith *realizes* Jesus Christ can do anything, **yet even then the disciples did not realize the truth of what Jesus was telling them.** In **verse 34** we read, *but they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.*

The disciples, those closest to Jesus, simply didn’t have room in their minds for a Messiah who would come and suffer and die and then rise from the dead. It was beyond the scope of their imagination.

But listen, when it comes to Jesus and his ability, nothing should be beyond the scope of your imagination or my imagination. Jesus can do anything!

**Do you REALIZE that you can have an Expectant Faith that God can Do or Be something in your life BECAUSE the One you put your faith in, is One who can do ANYTHING?!**

This is the Basis of Expectant Faith. It’s not “faith in faith.” It’s faith in a God who can do anything....and loves us.

- That begins with coming to Jesus, and saying I trust you to forgive me of my sins, I trust you as my Savior and Lord.
- Then it continues...I believe and I’m trusting you with the impossible in my life.

## **II. [WHAT EXPECTANT FAITH RISKS]**

**Secondly, consider with that expectant faith is a faith that RISKS.**

Now lets read together the next section, **verses 35-39**

As he continues his journey, Jesus passed through the City of Jericho.

Jericho was 18 miles from Jerusalem. And there were, and even today still are, two cities of Jericho. They’re right next to one, another side by side.

There’s the old city now in ruins. That was destroyed by the Lord during the time of Joshua in the Old Testament (Nina and I stood in that city).

And then there’s a newer city, a city rebuilt by Herod the Great right next to it. And I tell you that because Matthew and Mark say that Jesus healed a blind man as *he was leaving Jericho*, while Luke says that the healing happened *as he arrived*. And the best explanation is that the healing happened as Jesus left the *old area* of the city and then moved into *the new area* of the city.

And there was a blind man there. Mark tells us his name was Bartimaeus. And the Bible says that when he found out it was Jesus of Nazareth, he *cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me*. The biblical language indicates that he kept repeating that request over and over again. *Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me*. People began to try to hush him up. They said “*Bartimaeus, be quiet, Bartimaeus,*

you're making a scene. Bartimaeus, you're distracting everyone from what Jesus is trying to do." But the Bible says *he cried out all the more*.

No one could control Bartimaeus. Why? Because he had *expectant faith* in Jesus and he was willing to risk everything to call out for Jesus to help him.

It reminds me of what God the Father promises in **Jeremiah 29:13** God says *you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart*.

But that's how it works. God offers us His gift of salvation, His gift of grace, His gift of taking care of the needs in our lives, and by faith we reach out and we receive it.

Blind Bartimaeus *saw* something that a lot of people with 20/20 vision can't see. **When you're in the presence of Jesus, it's worth taking the risk**. The risk of faith to call on him, seeking him for redemption. Risk of expecting that he will hear, and he will answer.

And some of you are here. And you've just sort of become really timid about asking God for anything. I'm not sure why? Maybe because you've been disappointed in the past? Or maybe because you really doubt that God can do anything? Or maybe you wonder if God really cares about you? Or if he sees you? But just like Bartimaeus called out and said, *Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me*. You can risk calling on Jesus because he will hear and he will answer.

### III. [WHAT EXPECTANT FAITH REQUESTS]

There's a third thing that I want you to see about *expectant faith* in this text. Think with me about **what expectant faith REQUESTS**.

#### Read Luke 18:40-41

In **verse 40**, *And Jesus stopped and he asked for Bartimaeus to be brought close to him*. And then he asked Bartimaeus, a question, *What do you want me to do for you?*

Don't walk past that question, *What do you want me to do?*

Think about where Jesus was headed? Jericho was 18-miles away from Jerusalem, 18-miles away from where he knew he would be mistreated, be arrested, be beaten, he would be nailed to a cross and buried in the ground. He knew that his death was just 18 miles away. *An ordinary person would have been so preoccupied with what was right in front of him - all of that suffering - that it would have been impossible for him to think about anybody else or anybody else's need*.

Not Jesus. His circumstance, his feelings, his schedule never diminished his compassion and his mercy for others. And so out of a "reaching love" for this man He asked the question, *what do you want me to do for you?*

Do you remember the Arabian fable of "the Genie in a Bottle"? Or the version immortalized in the

American TV classic series, "*I Dream of Genie*." Rub the bottle and a Genie pops out and you can ask for anything! Well, suddenly Bartimaeus had that kind of opportunity - the opportunity of a lifetime.

He was trapped in a prison of blindness, darkness from which there was no escape and no relief - **and so with expectant faith, he requested something impossible. Lord, let me recover my sight**. I love that request. He didn't say, *Lord, I'd just like to receive a little bit more money when I'm out here begging. If they could just give me a little bit more*. That's not what he said.

*Lord, I just wish I had somebody to help me around because I'm blind*. That's not what He prayed for.

He prayed for what he saw as his greatest need. Lord, let me recover my sight.

That's what Bartimaeus said. **What would you say?** What do you do when the one who can do anything asks? *What do you want me to do for you?*

I believe that Jesus is in this place today, do you believe that? And I believe, through His Word, He's asking each one of us the same question he asked, Bartimaeus. *What do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you right now?*

If Jesus asked you that question, what would you say? You might say,

- *Lord, take away this emotional pain from my past*
- *Or Lord, give me a job*
- *Or Lord heal my body.*
- *Oh Lord, bring peace back to our family because we just don't have any peace at home.*
- *Or Lord help me to keep from losing my temper with the people that I care about the most.*

Right now, in your mind, in your heart, take a moment and just think about what you would say if Jesus asked you "*what do you want me to do for you?*" Because He is. And be specific, don't just say, "*well, Lord bless me*." Don't just say *Lord make me stronger*. No, be specific about something in your life.

And don't let the impossible keep you from making your request, because Jesus is more than able to accomplish the impossible. Like Bartimaeus you and I need Jesus' help today and we can ask for it with Expectant Faith.

And then I want you to notice

### IV. WHAT EXPECTANT FAITH RECEIVES

In **verse 42** Jesus said to Bartimaeus, *Receive/recover your sight*. Literally in the original language He just said one word. He just said. **See**. Jesus said, *see*. It only took one word from his lips to accomplish a miracle in Bartimaeus's life. *Lord, I want to see*. Jesus said. **See**. And suddenly he could see.

The Lord told Bartimaeus, *your faith has made you well*. (Not *I believe in God* faith, but *I believe God can do this*

faith)

Notice Bartimaeus's response. The Bible says *he received/recovered his sight*. And then it says *he followed Him*. And then it says *he glorified/praised God and other people, when they saw it, gave praise to God*. Because when Jesus brought sight to that blind man, the people recognized, *“this is the Messiah.”*

In all of the Old Testament never was a blind person healed and given their vision - not “one time. And they had come to believe, from Old Testament prophecy that when the Messiah came, that one of the signs that he was the Messiah was that he would bring sight to the blind. The Bible talks about it in **Isaiah 29:18** *In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.*

**Isaiah 35:5** (ESV) *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;*

Expectant faith. Listen - this is important. **Expectant faith RECEIVES exactly what Jesus wants you to receive.** When you have expectant faith in God to do something for you, and God is all-powerful, all-loving and all-wise – then you're expecting to receive exactly what Jesus, who is God, wants you to receive and knows you need most.

Corrective – The Bible does not support a “name it and claim it” type of mentality. *“Whatever I want and think I need the most, I claim it by faith, God will do it for me.”*

NO! It's better than that....

What if Jesus had told Bartimaeus “no?” Then he also would have given him grace to understand why *no* was the best answer for him.

The apostle Paul got a “no” from the Lord concerning a “throne” in his flesh (probably sight too).

**2 Corinthians 12:8–9** (ESV)

*<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me*

He received an answer - exactly what was best for him and exactly what God wanted to give him.

One of the most awesome stories of expectant faith that I've heard in a long time is the story of **Jake Olson**.

When Jake was eight months old he was diagnosed with a rare form of eye cancer called *retinoblastoma*. It left him with cancerous tumors in both eyes. His left eye was removed at 10 months old. And then he immediately began chemotherapy to save his right eye. Miraculously, although the cancer returned 8 times, Jake's doctors were able to save his right eye, and for 12 years, that single right eye showed Jake his entire world.

But then in September 2009, when Jake was 12, the cancer returned, and this time, the doctor said the only way

to save his life was to remove the right eye too. The surgery was planned for November.

If you knew that you only had a limited number of days to see anything, what would you want to see? What would you want to look at if you knew that in just a limited number of days they're going to take the only eye that you have and that's it, you won't see ever see anything again?

Here's what 12-year old Jake did. He, like his dad, had become a huge USC (Univ. So. Calif.) football fan, so he and his dad went and watched all the USC games and practices he could.

With each passing day he took every opportunity just to look at the people he cared about most. He said. *“Dad, I want to look at you. Mom, I want to look at you.”* Other family members he just looked at them, just wanted to look at them because he knew he wouldn't be able to see them again.

His surgery was in November. And Jake's final request was for the house to be decorated for Christmas early so that he could see the lights and the decorations one last time.

And then the day came for his surgery. As they were traveling to the hospital, Jake put his face against the window and he looked out, realizing this would be the last time he would see the world. From underneath his glasses, tears were streaming down his cheeks. He looked to one side of the car then he looked to the other. And it was more than his mom and dad could bear to watch (as you can imagine).

And yet through it all, *before, during and after* that surgery, Jake continued to live with a deep faith in Jesus Christ. Jake's mom Cindy says this about Jake's faith. She said, *“just to see his spirit grow and not shrink through these trials is a testimony to Jake's willingness to grow in his relationship with Christ.”* And Jake himself said, **“God always has a plan. It may not be our plan. But it's always the best plan.”** A 12-yr old said that.

That was 2009. And in 2017, when blind Jake was a sophomore in college, Jake made history. Undaunted, he became the first blind college football player ever to take the field for his beloved team, USC in their game against Western Michigan. Jake became the first blind long snapper for his team and for college football...

**WATCH VIDEO...**

**2 Corinthians 12:10** *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Let me tell you what that is. That is *Expectant Faith in God*. That comes from the Apostle Paul and that comes from a 12 year old boy who said, *“God always has a plan. It may not be our plan. But it's always the best plan.”*

And when you have that kind of faith. Then you'll receive whatever God has for you. And whatever he has for you because He loves you and knows all the things we can't know, is ALWAYS the best. (And if you'll think through it, you'll always want exactly what God's wants for you.)

**CONCLUSION**

And so as we come to a close today. I want to encourage you to come with *expectant faith*, REALIZING what Jesus Christ did for you? He took every step, all the way to Calvary, for you. His body was pierced and fastened to the cross, for you. Blood flowed from his head and his hands and his feet and his side, for you.

And you can come to him with RISKY, REQUESTING expectant faith like Bartimaeus did and say, "*Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me.*"

And you will RECEIVE. You don't have to beg him and beg him, as if he doesn't want to give you what you need.

IF YOU ASK HIM, He will hear you and HE WILL...

BOW HEADS.

GOSPEL PRAYER:

*Dear Jesus. I know I am a Sinner. I know you are the Savior. Right now I turn from my sin and I turn to you in faith. Forgive me and make me Yours. Be my Savior and my Lord forever. Amen.*