

**Remnant Life Church**

January 13, 2019

**Core-Life Change: The Danger of Expectations**

Matthew 16:1-12

A second element that can prevent us from making core-life changes are expectations

- Tell me about your expectations, especially as it relates to people, and I'll tell you about the disappointments in your life
- Tell me about the details of what you expect of your own life and I'll tell you of the discontentment you live with
- The expectations we place on people are like a ceiling – you may be able to run, jump, and touch them from time to time but you can never stay there
- And the greater the expectations and the depth of detail of them, the greater the depth of disappointment when they aren't met
  - If you are a perfectionist this is most likely the greatest source of struggle you have with other people
  - You expect everyone around you to meet and maintain the unrealistic level of perfection that you place on yourself
- Think back for a moment to a disappointing time that was brought about by someone letting you down
  - How fresh and real is that pain or disappointment, right now regardless of the amount of time past, after its been brought again to your mind?
    - Yet many will feel there is never a reason, no logical explanation, as to why their expectations are not met
    - This is what keeps the disappointment alive in our lives – we replay the event and fully agree with the reason we are upset
    - It is the anticipation and expectation of “fair.”
    - Yet “fair” should never, ever be expected!
  - Dennis Wholey (American author mostly of self-help books) *“Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting a bull not to gore you because you're a vegetarian.”*
- Def: Expectation – a belief that something will happen in a particular and specific way
- Question: Why do people place expectations on one another, many times that they themselves could not live up to, and then become so angry, offended, bitter, and unforgiving when it doesn't happen the way they thought that it should?
  - Christians do this and churches are filled with people who are hurt when others don't behave in the way they expect them to.
  - Placing created expectations on another person is also a very powerful tool satan will use to bring division into our homes, our marriages, our friendships, and even our churches.

- The Pharisees and Sadducees were similar in their function among the people but very much opposed to one another in their philosophies
- What could get two adversarial camps to unite together? A common enemy.
  - An ancient Sanskrit proverb from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC that says - *The enemy of my enemy is my friend*
  - The enemy of both these groups was Jesus Christ – and this united them
- Both groups were very strict adherents to the law given by God through Moses (Mosaic Law)
  - But the Law of God had become so important that it had taken the place of knowing and demonstrating the love of God
  - Nothing and no one was more important to them than the Law
  - What was Jesus doing that could unite these two groups of extremists?
    1. Sadducees – Jesus taught and spoke often of the resurrection of the dead and the presence of both angels and demons – something that the Sadducees denied to be true
    2. Pharisees – Jesus was consistently showing them to be imposters and exposing their hypocrisy, pride, and the tyrannical way of ruling over the people they were supposed to help guide, protect, and love.
    3. For both groups – Jesus did not meet the expectations they had of who and what the Messiah would be
- So, in **Matt 16:1** they are demanding a sign from Jesus that He was the Messiah
  - They wanted again what happened when God gave the law to Moses (**Ex 19:16-20:25**)
  - They wanted the thunder and lightning that to them confirmed the power of the Law of God
- Second, their expectation was not that Jesus would come as a political or even military leader who would subdue and drive out the Romans
  - They were expecting the “Son of David” to be a conquering king just like David back in the times of the years of Israel’s glory and splendor
  - They certainly had already heard of the miracles
  - But if Jesus had agreed to their demand (easy to do) performing for them would have been merely another way for them to exalt themselves and secure their power
- But the fact is, Jesus was not in any way what they wanted or expected Him to be
  - He was humble, unobtrusive, avoided and discouraged publicity
  - He even gave instructions to people that He had healed not to tell anyone
  - Contrast that to the actions of the Pharisees and even the actions of many in ministry today
- Jesus did not meet their expectations, and they were disappointed and discontent with Him
- Jesus came with one primary message, and it still resonates today
- These are the very first recorded spoken words of Jesus at the outset of His ministry
  - **Matt 4:17** – *From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*



- Were the Pharisees and Sadducees interested in repentance? Not at all!
- They only wanted to ensure and maintain their positions of power and wealth
- Now before we get too high and mighty in our judgment consider the second half of the story
  - The disciples, often used in the Bible as a representation of us, the everyday Christian
    - showed their own on-going struggle with faith
    - When they got across the Sea of Galilee, they discovered that they had brought no food (16:6-7)
    - Jesus reminds them of what they had seen Him do on a much greater scale (16:9-10)
    - But it was not about bread to eat - it was about guarding their hearts against the false and selfish teaching of the day
    - That is a very real threat to us today and will continue to increase as the last days intensify
- How do you avoid placing unrealistic or inappropriate (places they should not be) expectations on others?
  - 1. Don't allow a dependency on others to become your source**
    - a. God is the source of all things in my life (Phil 4:19 - *And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*)
    - b. To place that on someone or something else is idolatry meaning it is before God
  - 2. Honestly consider the motivation of your expectations**
    - a. Who benefits from what you expect to happen?
    - b. Most often when we are disappointed, it is because what we desired did not happen and I did not get what I wanted
    - c. When we defer to and prefer others in humility, we lose the motivation of expectation
  - 3. Make a conscious effort to stop trying to control your life environment as it relates to other people**
    - a. What does our desire to control everything say about our faith in God?
    - b. Understand and accept the true foolishness of pre-determining someone else's decisions, behavior, or actions.
- Over the last 15 years or so of my life, I have come to the place of, with the exception of a few select people and situations, stopped expecting anything from anyone.
  - That way I am delighted when someone does or says something nice for me
  - I am not disappointed when they don't because I wasn't expecting them to anyway
- My exceptions:
  1. I expect God always to be true to who He says He is in the Bible
  2. I expect my wife to love me unconditionally
  3. I expect my family to love me in spite of myself

4. I expect my closest friends to have my back  
(This is a very small group of people)
- Notice the absence of specifics even of those I expect these things from – my only specifics are what God’s Word tell me about Him
  - What do I expect from God?
    - Listen to **Isaiah 9:6** - *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*
    - Wonderful counselor – expectation of His wisdom (top advisor)
    - Mighty God – expectation of power (mighty warrior)
    - Everlasting Father – expectation of care (provider forever)
    - Prince of Peace – expectation of wholeness (life calmer)
  - When we are willing to stop placing expectations on others in order to satisfy our own wants and desires, we will cut off a constant stream of disappointment flowing into our lives and instead we then make our focus the only true source of real contentment – our Heavenly Father and a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
  - Must expectation lead to disappointment? It does not have to but it almost always does.
  - Stop hurting yourself and others by placing your belief in what will happen in places where it does not belong.
  - In 1922 Helen Lemmel, a songwriter and composer born in England; directed the chorus group for many of Billy Sunday’s evangelistic meetings; wrote a song called “The Heavenly Vision”
  - Biblical source: *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus* – **Heb 12:2**
  - You know this song by the words of the first line of the refrain and they tell us exactly what we need to do in order to avoid the disappointment and danger that come from foolish expectations  
*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim; in the light of His glory and grace*