

Ephesians 4:4 Expectation
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One Expectation

We're continuing our study of the book of Ephesians today. I want to focus in on just a couple phrases today. We're in Ephesians 4:4, and I want to deal with these two things – "one faith", and "one hope", better translated "one expectation. But I'm going to do them in the reverse order of how they appear here. I'm going to say a few things about one faith before I get into our one expectation.

Eph 4:4 *There is one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling;***5** *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*

We spent a little bit of time last week describing the reality of true unity in Christ. We saw that unity is not something we're trying to create, but rather something we are trying to preserve because it is something that God has completed through the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. In the resurrection, the dead womb of the earth gave birth to one new man. Christ the head, and many who have been made one spirit with Him by faith. We who have been crucified with Him, by faith come forth in His resurrection. In other words, we live by and in His life. We live by His Spirit.

And because of this Paul realizes and proclaims that we are not many, but one. We are not many trying to be like one. We are the corporate body of the One. We are His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and is in all. All, that is, who have been born of that Spirit.

And so, in this body, regardless of our darkened thoughts to the contrary, there is really only one Life, one Spirit, one Mind, one judgment, etc. Now our ignorance along with our refusal to know this new life can cause us to bring our own nothingness and blindness into His finished work. That can be, and certainly often is, the case. And though that can prevent the body of Christ from functioning as an expression of Him who is the life, it can prevent us from acting or relating as one, it doesn't make us less than what we are.

We are either one in Spirit or we are not born again. God only has one Spirit to give you. And so we were saying last week that only when we bring *our* mind, *our* ideas, *our* judgment, *our* doctrine, even our ideas about unity into Him do we experience division in the flesh. We divide in the flesh what is one in the spirit. But Christ is never divided.

But the Spirit of Truth, the revealing of Christ, the renewing of the mind will bring us all to a place in our heart where we see one thing. How? Because we all believe the same teaching. No. Because we all read the same book? We have the same pastor? No. We have the same experience with spiritual gifts. No. Because we all

decide its high time for us to get along. Not likely. **The Spirit of Truth brings us to see one thing because there is only one thing that He sees, and only one thing that He shows.**

This is called the unity of the faith. This is called the "one faith" that is mentioned in verse 5. This does not mean there is one creed, or one set of generally accepted articles of faith, or anything like that. It means that there is only one thing that God sees, has relationship with, and is trying to show the heart that will turn. There is only one view that He has. One Son that He knows. One sight that is before His eyes. The one faith is the knowledge of God – God's knowledge. It is what He sees. And this is what He is bringing us to. Growing up as a Christian is directly proportional to the measure that His view, called faith, is working in your soul. And He doesn't have opinions.

Opinions are not part of faith. An opinion, by definition, is not faith. Faith is substance. It is the substance of what cannot be seen. It is where your soul shares His view, and you are therefore not blown too and fro by winds of doctrine. Not blown around by false doctrines or blown around by true ones. Rather you are anchored, behind the veil, in the reality of what God knows.

If we were all sitting here this morning in the complete dark, we could possibly have an argument as to what my wife looks like. Somebody could insist, based upon some experience they once had, that she had black hair. Another interjects that they've heard she has only one leg. And then there would be somebody that argues brilliantly that, based on the incredible noise level they heard as they walked by our house, she is without question the mother of at least 15 children.

What would dispel all opinions and bring everyone to the full knowledge of Jessie? Would it be the best argument? Would it be the person who could most effectively defend their opinion? Or would it be when the many all come to one Light, and see the same thing. There would be no arguing over her hair, her leg, or her offspring, once light revealed the fact of the matter.

Faith is an experience of God's fact. It is one light showing you one Son.

And so long as many souls are learning by the One Spirit that is in them, they will come to what Paul calls the unity of the faith, the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. That is actually in verse 13. But it is stated in verse 5 quickly as well. We have come to one faith. Not one religion. Not one conviction. But one God-given, soul conforming, spiritual comprehension of the Son of God. We who are baptized into this one Spirit, will be led by that Spirit into God's view of salvation.

And this faith that works in you produces an expectation. It's not a question. It's a fact. If there is faith, there will be hope/expectation. 99 times out of 100 in your New Testament, the word hope should be translated "expectation". It is not talking about a wish or desire. It is talking about something that is certain in its coming. Like a woman who is pregnant. She is expecting. She is in expectation. Like a farmer who has planted the crop. He is expecting. He's not really hoping. It's only a matter of providing the right environment, and the increase will come. It's only a matter of not destroying or squelching what has been planted and it will come forth.

Faith, if it is the faith given to you by God, will produce in your soul a God-given expectation. Faith gives rise to expectation and expectation gives rise to love. Love

is the substance, the experience, the encounter, the reality. God is love, and expectation will bring about an experience of God.

But faith comes first. Faith works in you according to God's view. And as it works in you it begins to change everything. And perhaps the thing most greatly impacted is expectation. You begin to expect the appearance of what God has planted. In other words, you begin to anticipate an inward experience of Jesus Christ. You wait for His appearing. You look to see Him, and wait with certainty. You look to Him the author and finisher of your faith. And the expectation of God, the One who began a good work in you, slowly becomes your expectation.

Before I say a whole lot about that, I'd like to say something about true and false expectation. This verse says that we come to "one hope of our calling". Better translated, it says "one expectation of our calling". And that is true, but it is true only if the expectation is the one being worked in you by the Spirit. What I'm trying to say is that, unfortunately, most Christians have their hope, their expectations, set on completely imaginary things. Our expectations are the inventions of our carnal minds – not even remotely related to what God has given to us in Christ.

It is my opinion that, for the most part, the church preaches the wrong expectation. You know, many people live long decades as Christians with expectations in God that are never realized. And, of course, that is never because God does not provide and show and teach and give and lavish upon believers everything that He promised. It is only because we are waiting for the wrong thing. We have created our own inheritance. We have imagined where this is supposed to go. Let me say it plainly. **Disappointment in God is born out of imaginary expectations.**

And I don't mean that you are expecting too much. I mean quite the opposite. You are expecting too little, something too insignificant, as well as in the wrong realm and unto the gain of the wrong man. We have imaginary expectations, and we secretly demand God meet them. Knowingly or unknowingly, we dream up our own versions of what the experience and outcome of salvation is.

And then, of course, we have to create all sorts of theologies and explanations to get God off the hook for not coming through with what we think he was supposed to. The church promises that God will always do this, and never allow that, etc. And then, when we are disappointed in circumstances, we get upset with the God that we have crowned king of our circumstances. And so we find books and empathetic pastors who will say things like "Well, God works in mysterious ways"....that's if your lucky, and if your not, your pastor might say "you didn't have enough faith".

What a horrible system. We invent what we are to expect from God. It doesn't happen. And there is nothing left to do but blame God or blame ourselves. **Both self-condemnation and anger towards God are born out of false expectation.** I invite you to give that statement some thought. False expectations of man. False expectations of God.

I'm not sure what is more pathetic than the body of Christ calling out to God in selfish anticipation for something less than, and irrelevant to, what He has given in us His Son. I wonder what that looks like from God's perspective. A people to whom He has given Christ, ignorant of what He has given, but pleading with Him for something unimaginably less.

This week, for the first time in some years, I was watching a preacher on TV. The church building, which must have been a football stadium, was packed out with tens of thousands of people listening with bated breath and taking copious notes. A sea of human beings, clearly hungry to hear more of what was being said. What was being said? Well, it was horrible. It wasn't just wrong, it was poison. It was Christian-cancer.

A famous leader in the Lord's body, somehow making some distant reference to something in Ephesians chapter 1, was making the point that God, before laying the foundation of the earth, had it in his heart to provide a way for you and I to live abundant lives. And then he went on to describe these abundant lives. Enjoyable relationships. Freedom from mediocrity. Plentiful finances. Positive self-esteem. Victory over bad habits. Perfect "divine" health. Success in every endeavor. A right to be better than average. And on and on he went...as my stomach turned.

Why is that so horrible. Can God not assist in some of these natural things? Does God not, at times, heal bodies and help circumstances. You all know that he does. But what you have here is a man-made inheritance, a cooked up salvation, that has absolutely nothing to do with Christ and everything to do with personal gain in the natural realm. Why even quote the Bible? Why even mention the name Jesus. This sort of expectation has nothing to do with Him except that perhaps He is the one handing out all of the fringe benefits to believing the right things.

What a distorted, Christ-less, sell-out. Ask me how I really feel about it. Exchanging the eternal and spiritual reality of life in Christ for a pile of vanishing soul candy in the natural realm. Making God the fulfiller of all of my natural lusts for personal greatness. Bringing God's salvation down to a fulfillment of adamic lust and greed. Demanding God's Son grant to us the capricious desires of our narcissistic unrenewed souls, and then smugly ignoring what God has done by uniting us to His One and only Son.

We expect from Him something pathetically less than, and irrelevant to, what He has given us in Christ. And then, to top it off, we so often take offense when He won't grant our genie-in-the-bottle requests. That a literal sea of human beings could sit and not only tolerate that sort of teaching, but lap it up with joy on their faces is a testimony to the blindness and darkness of our soul. Jesus said it correctly.

Joh 8:44 *You are of the Devil as father, and the lusts of your father you desire to do. That one was a murderer from the beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it. 45* *And because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.*

Alright, I'll calm down now. I'm not mad at any person or church. I'm just disgusted with the adamic mind. We are just this pathetic. And I'm every bit as disgusting as anyone else. And I don't say that in condemnation, but simple realization. But sometimes it comes into view so clearly that you wonder how God could even seek to save us in His Son. But then it becomes even more apparent why our salvation begins with death. It begins with an end. First baptized into His death. Nothing of the old, nothing of the first, nothing of that man is allowed into this heavenly inheritance. We may hold on to our darkened understanding, but everything of God's true salvation is "incorruptible and undefiled and unfading". That's how 1 Peter says it. And that statement has become a delight to my heart.

But do you see how we have the wrong expectations? We have the wrong expectations, **and** we expect things in the wrong realm. We have heard that God loves, and so we project our understanding of love upon Him and wait to see it in the earth. We have heard that God is good, and so we project our understanding of good onto God, and then try to find it in the earth. But it is so much easier and purer and clearer and more real to expect the experience of God, the goodness of God, the love of God, where it can truly be known and experienced - in Christ.

Somebody sent me an email recently asking me if I still believed that God shows his goodness to us in the natural realm. I responded to their email with a few comments and then a little make-believe story. First, I said yes. I believe that the goodness of God can be seen in this realm as well as in Christ. But I then said that it is honestly quite difficult to understand it or know it anywhere other than Christ.

Suppose you are a person who is in desperate need of a job. You have been praying about it and suddenly, out of nowhere, you walk to your car and a piece of paper, carried by the wind, lands on your windshield. It's a job application for what looks like the perfect job. Wow, the Lord is so good! You fill it out, turn it in and get the job. This has to be the goodness of the Lord. A manifestation of His great love for me. Well, a week into the job, you realize that you hate it. The job is boring, your boss has bad breath, and your hours are horrible. Maybe this wasn't the Lord. Maybe this is warfare from the enemy. That night after work, you get home and there is a message on your answering machine with another job offer. Wow, thank you Lord!...you are so good. This is incredible. In your love, you delivered me from my bad job. But on your way to your first day of work at this new job, your car runs out of gas on the side of the highway. Lord, what are you trying to teach me? You must have something better in store for me. I know you're always working for my good. And so you get back in your car and pray that the Lord, in His goodness, would send you a friendly motorist with gas can. Lo and behold, somebody pulls up behind you. It's a police officer. Surely he can help. Thank you Lord, you are so good. But the police officer doesn't have any gas. And not only that, he notices that your tags are expired and writes you a ticket. And on and on we go through life trying to find and define the goodness of God in things, circumstances, and experiences in the natural realm.

We have expectations to know Him, to know goodness, to know love, through the constantly-changing things of the earth. We try to define goodness by experiences rather than see goodness defined in Christ. And of course we will nearly always call everything we like and enjoy "the goodness of God", and everything we don't like "the work of the enemy". These things are constantly changing, and so our understanding of His goodness is always shifting and confusing us as we walk through circumstances.

But in Christ it is not this way. In Christ we learn a goodness that first of all shames all other goodness, and second of all is never changing. It is constant, perfect, and concrete. You can rest in it regardless of circumstances. You can grow in it despite situations. You can count on it eternally. You don't have to guess at what God is doing or saying or trying to say. It is there as a permanent spiritual reality. It will be there when the earth hurts you, and when it doesn't. It will be there long after your body has gone back to dust.

What are you expecting? Does your expectation of God have anything to do with what God has promised? Did somebody tell you what to expect?...or did the Spirit of God reveal the expectation of the Father? Did the Spirit define what salvation is and where it goes? Maybe we're waiting for the wrong thing. Maybe we're expecting something that is irrelevant to and incredibly less than what God is trying to show you. Wouldn't you feel silly to know that you had spent a lifetime expecting from God something that was puny and unrelated to what He provided in His Son? Wouldn't it be a sad awakening to realize that you had imagined an inheritance?

We come into the church with this idea that "now my life is going to be...", and then either you or your leader fills in the blank. But even before we fill in that blank we've contradicted salvation. We've contradicted the cross. The whole reality that you've come to isn't about "now my life can be"...because what you just said yes to was "now my life is lost". What you just signed up for in new birth was "I've been crucified with Christ", "baptized into His death", "buried with Him", "reckoned dead". **Your salvation isn't going to be the improvement of your life, but the discovery of His.** And therefore, who in the world are you to set the parameters, and define the reality of this salvation. Who do we think we are that we can drag our carnal lusts into this relationship and make them relevant. How can we put expectation on Him, when He is the life of this body, and it is He who must work His expectation in us.

God has an expectation. Paul tells us here in Ephesians chapter four that we have come to one expectation. What is that expectation.? Have we stopped staring at our list of personal expectations long enough to even consider that God might have an expectation of His own?

In Ephesians 1:18, we read a prayer of Paul where he asks the Lord that "the eyes of heart will be enlightened in order to know what is the EXPECTATION of God's calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints".

God has an expectation. It's what you've been called to. It's God the Father's expectation. And it has to do with Him getting an inheritance in the saints. What is that expectation? It's a harvest. Not the harvest of many, but the harvest of the One. It is the increase of the one in the many. The glory and exaltation of the One and Only Son in and through His body. Christ formed in you. Christ increasing in your soul. And if that doesn't excite you as much as the synthetic counterfeit that we first fell in love with it is only because we have absolutely no idea what we're talking about. If we think that adopting God's expectation is a step down from our own, then we better get on our faces and ask God to show us the true riches of gaining Christ, and the utter insignificance of everything else.

If we, as His body, can't drudge up some interest in being filled up to the fullness of God, and would rather hear some charlatan proclaim a carnal utopia where dreams come true, and God is the author of my success story, and all the fringe benefits of being a child of the King....well then, God help us. Seriously. God help us.

By nature, our expectations will not only be for the wrong thing, but they will be towards the wrong realm. They will be the things that we thought we gain before we found Christ. And if we are not careful, Christ will become the new means to the same end. Same goal, different path. But if the One Spirit that is in us is allowed to teach us in the way that He must, then we will discover the expectation of God. And that expectation will never disappoint us. To have God's expectation filling your soul

is to find a sure thing. A safe bet. Its only a matter of providing the right environment, and the increase will come. Its only a matter of not destroying or squelching what has been planted and it will come forth. "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion".

I'm not sure if God gave you that job. I have no idea if God sent the guy with the gas can on the highway. But I'm positive that God gave you Christ. And if you will set your heart to know this gift, then you will find the love and goodness of God. And if you will allow His Spirit to teach you your salvation, then your expectation and God's expectation will be one and the same.

I'm running out of time, but I want to leave you with a verse in 1st Peter, and a few comments about it. This is my favorite Scripture having to do with expectation in the entire Bible. Unfortunately, some of its greatness is obscured through bad translation. If you have a LitV by Jay P. Green, then you're in good shape with this verse. If not, let me read you from the LitJ. That's my own translation of this verse. And it's virtually identical to the LitV...but I spent some time on these verses so I'll read you from my translation.

Its in 1st Peter chapter 1, starting in the middle of verse 3, and going on through verse 5. The major translation error, for those who are interested, is an almost complete ignoring of the perfect tense of the passive participle in verse four. And then a few other minor translation choices in some prepositions. But it was written, and therefore should read, something like this.

"3 He has begotten us into a living expectation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you, 5 the ones being kept in the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

There's a lot that I would like to say about these verses. But let me just summarize what I understand Peter to be saying. You and I have been born again of God into a living expectation through the Resurrection of Christ. In other words, it is because we have become partakers of Him who is the resurrection, and we are of His resurrection, and the power of His resurrection, as Paul says, works in us, that we have a living expectation. And we have come into an inheritance that is purely heavenly. It certainly does bleed over into the earth in a variety of ways, but it is something entirely incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, HAVING BEEN kept in heaven for us. That's the major translation error. "Having been" kept.

And we, are being kept in this, the power of God, through faith. Faith accesses the grace in which we stand. We have come to a salvation that is spiritual, eternal, perfect, immaterial, incorruptible...and because we are in the New Covenant, the day of the Spirit and not the letter, this salvation is ours to have revealed. It is ready to be revealed.

The reason I love these verses so much is because they define the person and place of our expectation. And the necessity that it be revealed. Christ in resurrection is the Person. Heaven, and not earth. Spirit and not flesh, is the realm. And the revealing of Christ unto faith is the access. This is the expectation that the Spirit will work in us if He is allowed. This is the "one hope/expectation of our calling". If our

expectation comes to be along these lines, then it will never know disappointment. It will never be frustrated. It cannot be stopped.

Amen