

Ephesians 4:4-7  
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## One Expectation pt. 2

Last week we spent our time looking at Ephesians 4, verses 4 and 5 at how, in Christ, there is one faith and one expectation. The idea of expectations – right and wrong – has continued to be at the forefront of my mind in the last couple weeks and so I want to continue sharing some thoughts about it this week.

This “one faith” is not one religion, or one creed, or one holy book. The one faith is the one thing that God sees, and therefore the only thing that He shows. The “unity of the faith” is the one view that God has. The One Son that he knows. The one thing that is present to His awareness, and therefore what He is trying to show us.

We saw that faith is an experience of God’s fact. It is one Light showing you one Son. And everyone that grows up into true faith will see exactly the same thing because it is the only thing that God is revealing. Its hard to mention any of this without jumping ahead to verse 13. In verse 13 Paul talks about the many coming to share the one view. What he calls the unity of the faith, the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. It is impossible to have disunity in the body of Christ if we are all baptized into one death, partaking of one Spirit, seeing with one Light, the one Son who is the life of us all. That is really an overview of what Paul is saying here.

But the one faith isn’t a bunch of natural minds agreeing on spiritual things. It is the one mind of the Spirit working in a bunch of people. And there is a huge difference between those two things. The church has spent 2000 years trying to unite natural minds in their opinions about one Son. Its not just that that hasn’t worked yet. Its that it cannot work. There is no unity in the flesh because souls are utterly independent and autonomous by nature until they are filled with the same Spirit and flooded with the same Light. You cannot make unity. You must be born of it. And even when you are born of it, you won’t walk in it until it is revealed in you – until you see the same Son with the same Light.

So again, faith is the mind of the Lord working in you. It’s not just the life of the Lord living in you. It’s the mind of the Lord operating in you. And what does it work in you? It works one expectation. It works in you an expectation of God’s purpose. In other words, when you share His mind, you experience His expectation. And that expectation is towards the full harvest of what He has planted. It is an expectation towards what Ephesians 4:13 calls the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”. That phrase says it all. We’re getting to that verse. But by the time we get there I’ll have said everything I know to say about it.

The entire book of Ephesians....perhaps you could even say the entire Bible... is a collection of arrows that point toward Ephesians 4:13. Where is everything going? What is everything for? Why did God...you name it. It all leads to what Paul says in

Ephesians 4:13. It leads to one mature man attaining to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

And that is not talking about a date in the future. This is a purpose statement. It describes God's goal. I don't believe that Paul is saying that one day, in the year 2097 AD, there will be such a perfect man on planet earth. There are some groups out there that teach that. But how could that ever really exist as a physical entity on planet earth. There are a lot of problems with that line of thinking - practical and otherwise. No, this is a direction of God. This is the way the Lord leads. This is the path he takes all men and women down, and what he steers them towards. He governs all things towards this end. You never have to guess what direction God is leading you. He is leading you towards the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

And if His mind is working in you, it is working in you according to His expectation. Your expectation (which is translated "hope" here) begins to line up with God's expectation. That is what we were talking about last time. And if you'll remember, I went on to attempt to describe that, unless God's expectation is working in us, we will dream up our own expectations from God. Its not that we're not born again. Its not that we don't read the Bible. But unless the Spirit of God works in us to show us God's expectation, the only alternative is to presume wrongly.

When Jesus was in the flesh, he healed a man who was born blind. This man had never seen a thing. And yet, this man had interacted in his environment for his entire life. What I mean is that, he had encountered trees, and buildings, rain, and sunlight, and people. He had known his parents, and siblings. And certainly, however this might work in a blind man, he had some mental image or concept of what these things and these people looked like. There's no doubt that, based on what he had felt, or heard, or smelled...he had some sort of idea in his head about the appearance of these things. Well, then Jesus spat in the dirt, made mud, and applied it to his eyes. And this man saw for the first time in his entire life. Here's my question: how many of his ideas about the appearance of things do you think that would have guessed right? I mean, how many of his mental images...images of his mom, or of a rain shower, or of a forest...how many do you think were just like what he imagined? ZERO. Why zero? Why would they all be wrong? Because there was nothing but darkness to work with. There was nothing but imagination until his eyes functioned to let in the light. It is utterly impossible for a man born blind to guess the appearance of something because he has nothing to work with.

Well, that is how we approach the expectation of God. You're not going to guess it right. You're not going to learn it from another person's guess. Its not learned through teaching, it is seen in the Light of His appearing. And when it is, it destroys whatever ideas and concepts were formerly there. It will never validate what was formerly there. Seeing something in the Light of His Spirit will necessarily contradict what was envisioned in darkness. Until you see by His Light there was nothing true to work with.

And, a couple weeks ago, we spoke of the need to allow the Lord to reveal in us the one expectation that comes out from the one faith. The one anticipation that arises out from one mind of the Lord. And this will always destroy the expectations that come out from ourselves, because they arise from darkness.

Its not safe just because you think you got your expectations from the Bible. There are a lot of people claiming that the Bible promises them all sorts of things. If you read the Bible without the mind of the Lord, the comprehension of the Spirit, then you're imagination will still define your expectations. You'll read **yourself** right into the stories, rather than see Christ in them. I mean, you'll read the story of the kingdom of Solomon and expect the Lord to work in your life the same way, rather than seeing the kingdom of God in Christ that is yours now in Him. You'll expect God to talk to you in words like he did to Moses, rather than finding that fulfilled and made far more real in how He now relates to you in Christ. You'll pray and wait for Elisha's double portion, without ever a clue as to what that story is speaking of.

What I'm trying to say is that you'll put yourself into a Scripture passage rather than pulling Christ out. You'll project your mind into the Bible, rather than gaining the mind of the Lord. And you can argue that your expectations are "biblical", and still entirely miss God's point. God must work in you and I the one expectation that comes out from one faith.

And I'm certainly not talking about LOWERING our expectations. Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm talking about pointing them toward the right thing. I'm talking about where your expectations are aimed. Are we expecting God to do in us what He promised and what He is always working towards in our soul?...or are we expecting he do something that is irrelevant to and far less than what He is after. Are we expecting God to give us a whole lot of other natural things in addition to Jesus? Or are we expecting God to reveal in us the immeasurable greatness or Christ. That is the difference between this "one expectation" given by God, and the many and different expectations proclaimed by man.

The reason I'm spending some time on this is simply because I talk to a lot of Christians. I hear what we say. Its not hard to see what we're expecting. I hear people say "I know the Lord will do this...", "I'm waiting on the Lord's timing for that..." "I'm trusting the Lord for this...". "Sooner or later God is going to..." And I'm not saying that the Lord won't do any of these things. I don't know what the Lord will do in the earth. But I do know something of what the God has done in Christ. And I have found it a sure thing to expect Him to let me know it, enjoy it, and walk in the good of that.

Much of my Christian life has been the pursuit of silly and wrong expectations of God, which necessarily brings about one of two things. On the one hand, there is disappointment and confusion when expectation is unmet. But equally dangerous, maybe even **more** dangerous on the other hand, there is false excitement and false confirmation when, by chance or some other way, wrong expectations seem to be realized. In other words, its frustrating to have wrong expectations of God and constantly face the fact that he does not meet them as you imagined. But its probably worse to have wrong expectations of God and then fool yourself into thinking that its actually working...that He's actually doing what you expected. Because then you can get stuck for an incredibly long time.

What can you expect of God? You can expect that He desires, far more than you do, to bring you into the full experience and awareness and enjoyment of His salvation. You can expect that He is awaiting and seeking every possible opportunity to reach your heart with His Truth. You can expect that your assumptions, presuppositions, apathy, ideas, and appetites are hindering him at every step of the way. It is never a

matter of whether you and I are resisting what He is seeking to do in us and show to us. It is only a matter of how and where.

And so you can expect that he has to work long and hard in your heart just to make the world look empty enough, religion to seem dead enough, and Truth to appear crucial enough, for you to even reach for it with your heart. But you can expect that, if you want Him to show you, He will show you the way out of one shadowy and passing realm, out of one blind and self-obsessed man, and into something, Someone, much greater...and eternal.

You can expect that He will bring you into an experience of full salvation by way of the cross. Not just the cross as a historical reality that you believe in. Not the cross as merely the means by which you are saved from hell. But the cross as the ever-present and ongoing journey of the soul. The cross as the way that your heart follows Him out of the Lie and into the Truth. The cross as a journey where you awaken to the death that He brought you into. You realize yourself crucified with Him. You progressively comprehend the death that He died on your behalf. Not a death that He died instead of you, but a death that He gave you in Himself. If you want it, you can expect to be conformed to THAT death, and no other.

And you can expect that He will open the eyes of your heart to see what lies on the other side of the divide of the cross – the universe of Christ where He is the light and the river and the bread and vine and the king and the priest and the throne. I'm not talking about what lies on the other side of your death. I'm talking about what lies on the other side of his death working in you. You can expect to know and experience all of these as concrete, perceivable realities that happen in you, and to have their truth changes you.

In other words, you can expect that God make real in you what He has made real by the cross. Like I said last time, I don't know exactly what to expect of Him in the earth. I mean, I don't really understand the why's and where's and when's of how God intervenes in the natural realm. I mean that seriously. I honestly don't know. I don't know if he'll heal you, though I have seen Him heal with my own eyes and know that He can. I don't know if he'll fix your circumstance, protect your loved one from making bad decisions, allow you to conceive a child, provide greater financial stability, keep this country from further moral degradation, find you a soul-mate, allow us to keep this church building, allow me to walk past 40 years of age.

I am quite aware that He **can** do all these things, but to be very honest, my expectation is not set on anything like this. These things very rarely come to my mind anymore...not because I'm some sort of spiritual-super-hero, but simply because my expectation is set on something else that I find to be so sure, so predictable, and so far superior. You can't praise a man for digging for gold where he knows, without question, that he will find it. That's not a sign of great maturity; it's really a no-brainer to dig where you always find treasure.

My expectations, in these past few years, have been aimed at something that has yet to let me down - God progressively making real in my soul what He has made real by His cross. God making dead to my heart what is dead to Him. Teaching me to live in and by and to abide in what He knows to be the substance and reality and Person of His salvation. I'm not trying to set myself up as an example, I'm just telling you what is real to me. When I get disappointed, it's never because God is

failing to do this. When I get disappointed it is because, for some reason or another, I've shifted my expectation to something else.

But you can count on God to show you the Son in whom, and by whom, you live. You can expect that that Son's life and nature and mind will gradually overwhelm and govern your soul. You can fully anticipate that He who began THIS work IN you, will bring it to completion. Its an absolutely safe assumption **IF** you'll allow Him to do it. If you'll look unto the Author and Finisher of faith. If you'll set your mind above, not on things on the earth. If you'll gaze at things unseen, not at things seen. If you'll ask the Father, and want the Father, to reveal His Son in you.

Julie said last week that the Lord was dealing with her expectations of God to be her Prince Charming. Well, we all have something like that. Personally, I've never wanted God to be my Prince Charming. That must be a woman thing. But I have my own version of that in a hundred unspoken ways that the Lord needs to destroy and teach me to aim my expectations in a direction that parallel His.

Well, what about my expectations of you? What are our expectation of each other? The Spirit of the Lord has changed these considerably as well. People of this world are naturally like ticks without a dog. No offense. They suck life from one another and are constantly disappointed when the supply runs dry or changes flavor. We're so quick to establish our natural expectations in one another based on felt need, affirmation, shared time, emotional co-dependence. These are the basic building blocks of relating in the flesh.

But the more I see of the Truth, the more my expectations of people have changed as well. I expect little of people these days. But don't misunderstand me, that's not a bad thing at all. That's actually a really, really good thing. This actually allows me to love and enjoy and care and give more. Real love and relatedness in Christ is always being hindered and polluted by wrong and unmet expectations in people, uncontrollable felt needs, emotional dependency, hurt feelings, and the like. There is this vacuous sucking sound in so many relationship where we suck identity and self-esteem and purpose out of each other. We bring our expectations, needs, and requirements knowingly or unknowingly into every relationship...and they are like hair-triggered booby traps just waiting to be tripped. Think about it – what is more dangerous than having an self-consumed adamic human putting deep expectation in another self-consumed adamic human. How long before something explodes? We see it all the time.

So here's the kinda ugly part....and then I'll get to the good. I expect you and I to be blind by nature. I expect flesh to seek its own gain. I expect flesh to clash with flesh, personalities to conflict at times, natural appetites to change, interests to waffle. As far as the flesh is consumed, I expect you'll see things in me that are ugly, and I'll probably see things that are ugly in you...when we find each other not drinking deeply of the Lord, or when we find each other with our masks off. I guarantee that I will let you down if your expectations are in my flesh. Count on it.

And my goal is not really to fix any of that. Its possible to misunderstand what I'm trying to say, and so I hope you don't. But I don't want to figure out a way to meet people's natural expectations, meet every felt need, master the pendulum swing of changing appetites and interests, and keep the right masks on at all times. That's not really what I'm going for in my relationships with you. Some people are

incredibly good at doing this, but all that it really accomplishes is perpetuating an illusion.

But here's the good part. When a tick finds a dog, it finds all that it wants and more than it needs. Needs are met. Appetites are fulfilled. Interest is kept. Life is abundant. And so, if ticks had half a brain, ones that found a dog would be free to relate with other ticks without demands, disappointments, expectations, needs, appetites, and co-dependence. What I'm trying to say is that when the Life of the Lord is more and more the expectation, the experience, the sustenance of our soul, then little by little we are able to relate to one another along the lines of what Paul describes in 1 Cor. 13. We can actually keep no record of wrongs. We can seek not our own gain. We can give and not take. Patience comes easy. Kindness is natural. There's not much to envy since we both have the same bountiful Christ. It's hard to be provoked, because what are you really going to take from me? It's easy to endure things, because what's the worst that can happen?

In other words, in coming to know Christ, our relationships with one another are hugely liberated from all of the self-obsessed expectations of the flesh. And we are free. Free to do what? Well, first and foremost, we're free to share an enormous dog. We're free to share the life of Christ that is our source, and life, and is flowing through our veins. We're free to relate in Him, by Him...free to relate together in all that He is, all that that means, and grow up together. But even more than that, we're free from needing one another for things that we can never be. Free from looking to one another for things that will never happen. Free from hurting one another through the inescapable disappointments of the flesh. Free from being able to ruin each others day, break each others hearts, tick each other off.

I'm not talking about zombie-like emotional detachment here. I'm talking about having emotions lining up with reality. I'm talking about having emotions invested in things according to truth. I'm talking about big things feeling big, and little things feeling little. This isn't the elimination of desire, this is desire coming into alignment with reality.

Well, what about God's expectations of us? Knowing the truth dramatically effects our understanding of this as well. So many Christians live day by day under the crushing weight of what they imagine to be God's expectations. To so many, Christian life is a whirlpool of guilt and shame and condemnation before God that makes life a heavy burden or makes God seem unknowable and unapproachable.

This is not good. But the answer to this is not to play down or minimize God's expectations, but rather to understand how and in who they are met. In other words, the solution isn't thinking that God doesn't want much. The solution is realizing the greatness of God's judgment in the cross, and truth of the One in whom we now relate to God.

There are a lot of books by Christian authors out there that are an attempt to help people deal with guilt and shame and condemnation that they feel before God. But rather than doing this by teaching the cross, and how we have been judged already in Christ, and now Christ is our life, and He is our relationship with God, and in Him Adam has been put away, and there therefore is no condemnation, etc....rather than destroying condemnation and shame **with the truth**, these books try to destroy condemnation and shame by saying that God doesn't expect much. God expects your best try. God only wants you to do these 5 things to discover your purpose.

God just wants you to put your heart into it. God just loves it when you get out there and go for it. God has a special and easy plan for you to make Him happy. Grace has you covered, just do what you can.

I'm sorry, but I'd probably rather see Christian bookstore filled with the Reader's Digest than that sort of thing. Why? Because it's a lie. Its not only a lie, it takes the expectation of the Father off of the perfection of His Son, and the finished work of the cross, and places it onto me, and my fleshly best attempt to turn over a new leaf.

Make no mistake about it, God's expectations are incredibly high and extremely exclusive. Everything we do or say or teach that under-emphasizes those expectations makes light of the Cross and greatness of Christ. Here are God's expectations: "be Holy, for I am Holy". But these expectations are fully met, and entirely satisfied and realized by what He has done in transferring you out of the kingdom of darkness and making you dwell in the Son of His love. And in this Son condemnation does not apply because condemnation is completely spent.

That does not mean that you are I are walking in the awareness, or the truth, or the understanding of this Son who is our life. But our awareness of truth does not change god's perspective or his acceptance. Our awareness has a great deal to do with what we experience and abide in, but it has nothing to do with what God has finished and how he sees us.

So God's expectations are not on us to do anything. They are on Christ to be everything. And Christ already is. He has already judged the fullness of the adamic man, and imparted into us the fullness of Christ. Again, whether or not we are walking in the truth of this is what is in question. But that doesn't change how God knows us. He knows us according to the finished work of the cross. He knows us complete in Christ.

So then, what does God expect of you and I? Well certainly not to pull some righteousness out of a hat. Certainly not to obey the law in the power of the flesh, or know spiritual reality with a carnal mind. His expectation for us is that we would turn our hearts to know the Truth. That we would look to Him to learn our salvation, and walk in it. There's nothing left to be done. There's only the issue of knowing what He has done. The issue is our blindness with regards to what has been finished. And its **only** when you don't know what God has done that you could possibly feel condemnation. Condemnation is one of the thousands of imaginations that don't exist in Christ, but exist in the darkness of the unrenewed mind. What I mean is that condemnation doesn't even make sense in Christ. There is nothing left to condemn. If you and I saw rightly, we would never feel condemnation again. Guilt, shame...all off these are born out of utterly false, make-believe, ideas with regards to God's expectations. They have no reality behind them except for the reality that our own mind creates.

God's expectations are not for what you can be or what you can do. God's expectations have to do with knowing and walking in what He has done. God expects you and I to want to know and learn to walk in a salvation called Jesus Christ.