

Intro: We live in a day of super sensitive citizens. We are easily offended, disappointed, and disillusioned. In times past when we didn't get our way and went off sulking and pouting over it, we were told to grow up, be a man, or be a woman. After all, you can't always have it your way; life is hard, so roll with the punches, take the lemons life gives you and make lemonade out of them.

But we now live in a different age. Nowadays when we don't get our way, and we pout and sulk for days over it, we are no longer told to grow up, instead, on the basis of emotional harm, we are told to sue whoever refuses to fulfill our wishes or give in to our demands.

Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of Sweet Cakes bakery in Portland, Oregon has been ordered to pay \$135,000 to Rachel and Laurel Bowman-Cryer, the lesbian couple who Aaron and Melissa refused to bake a wedding cake for. In defending the amount in which he ordered the Kleins to pay, Avakian, the head of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, claimed that the denial of service caused both women to go through emotional distress and added that Rachel Bowman-Cryer laid depressed in bed for days after she was told that Sweet Cakes does not service same-sex weddings.

Our expectations about how others, our country, our politicians, and even our God should treat us shapes our beliefs and behaviors. The Bible reveals this has always been the case.

People's differing expectations about God causes some to reject God, others to create their own version of God, and thankfully, some who find and accept the real God.

Read Text: John 7:25-31, 37-52 (Pages 1136 & 1137 in pew Bibles)

In the first part of our text we have some people from Jerusalem confused. Some were saying "isn't this the man they are seeking to kill?" They had heard that the religious leaders were seeking to kill Jesus. But here He is speaking in broad daylight in the public square. This doesn't make sense. This is not something you'd expect of a man that has a warrant out for Him. Consequently, they thought, "could it be that the authorities have changed their minds about Him. Do they now know that He is the Christ?"

But then they thought, but this is impossible for Him to be the Christ, for we know where this man comes from, for everyone knew that He was from Nazareth, the area around Galilee. This was an issue because some rabbis taught that the Messiah would be wholly unknown until he set out to obtain salvation for Israel.

Their belief that the origin of the Messiah will be unknown combined with their knowledge of where

Jesus was from, resulted in the conclusion that Jesus could not be the Messiah.

Then just a few verses down in verse 31, some of the people did believe Jesus was the Messiah because of the many miracles that He had performed. The belief among the Jews was that since the Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses, then He would perform miracles like Moses. This group of Jews expected the Messiah to be a miracle worker and Jesus had fulfilled these expectations.

When our expectations about God differ, we come to different and sometimes conflicting views and beliefs about God. We see this playing out in our nation in connection with the same-sex marriage debate. What we expect from God, whether condemnation or commendation, will determine what we believe about God and about how He would want us to respond to the same-sex marriage issue.

The problem in our society and in the Christian community is that there's a lot of expectations about God, some of which are baseless. In our text we see that in **verses 40-44** there were a lot of differing expectations about the coming Messiah, which led to different conclusions about Jesus. "When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? ⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" ⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him."

The people were divided over the issue of whether Jesus was or was not the Messiah and the same holds true today. These mixed views are birthed out of individual expectations, some unrealistic, some false, and some Biblical.

What are your expectations of God? Where do you get your expectations of God from? What kind of false expectations do you have of God or Jesus?

I. False Expectations

False expectations were preventing some in Jerusalem from believing in Jesus as the Christ--the Messiah. They wrongly thought He would be mysterious and no one would know where He came from. They also thought He had failed to meet the Biblical criteria of coming from Bethlehem, since they were unaware that He was born in Bethlehem. They naturally assumed that since Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth and Jesus grew up in Nazareth that Jesus was born in Nazareth.

Religious people, including Christians have a lot of false expectations concerning God. Some see Him rejoicing and approving of gay marriage. Others see Him looking forward to the day the gay community will burn in hell. Sadly, neither side can see God as

both loving the gay people while condemning the homosexual lifestyle.

The Bible is clear, God hates sin, but He loves the sinner, all sinners. The Bible is clear God doesn't desire that anyone should go to hell. The Bible says in **1 Timothy 2:1-4**, "*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*"

It so easy to form false expectations. Couples often enter marriage with the expectation that their spouse will make them happy. They expect a fairy tale wedding, followed by a fairy tale marriage. When their unrealistic expectations don't pan out they become disappointed. If the disappointment is great enough and lasts long enough, they become disillusioned. Disillusionment leads to marital death.

The same is true of God. When we hold unrealistic (unbiblical) expectations of God and He fails to come through for us, we become disappointed, then disillusioned. This can lead to the death of our faith or a reshaping of what kind of God we want.

There are whole spiritual networks and denominations that major on false expectations of God. Some promote a God who wants everyone healthy and wealthy. Some look for a God who should right every wrong and fix every problem, and do it according to their time table.

We embrace false expectations when we expect God to undo the pain and hurt we've inflicted on others. We embrace false expectations when we expect God to undo the financial mess our irresponsible spending habits have created.

Why are false expectations so easily formed within us? It's because most of our expectations of God come from our surrounding social environment or our inner desires. The world cannot help but to have false views and expectations of God. They don't know the truth and don't have the Spirit of Truth--the Holy Spirit within them. Our problem is that we listen too much to the world around us and the desires within us, and not enough to the Word of God that's been given to us.

What we need is right expectations of God, of His church, and of His people.

II. Right Expectations

People don't get turned off by churches and Christians that do hurtful and unchristian things; they get turned off because they expect Christians and churches to not do hurtful and unchristian things. They expect us to be perfect, loving, and

kind, and when we don't meet their expectations they reject us and God.

The world doesn't understand that we are a work in progress. It doesn't understand that we are sinners struggling and fighting against our sins. Most don't understand that Christians are imperfect and we make up churches which are imperfect.

But what about you? What are your expectations of God? What are your expectations for His church, for this church? What are your expectations for God's people? And most important of all, what source do you use to form your expectations?

Having the right expectations requires having the right source of information. Some of the Jews in Jerusalem didn't think Jesus could be the Messiah because they knew the Messiah was prophesized to be born in Bethlehem and they wrongly thought He was born in Nazareth.

The discovery channel or the history channel is not a good source for information on Jesus. And although the internet can provide a lot of accurate information on Jesus, it also provides a lot of false and misleading information on Jesus.

The only trustworthy source of information on God and Jesus is the Bible. We can know nothing about God apart from Him revealing Himself to us. He does this to a limited degree through His creation. But He does it to a great degree by way of His Word--the Bible.

The Bible clearly shows us that God doesn't promise to be our fix it man. He doesn't promise to be our universal garbage collector--our cleanup man. He doesn't promise to protect us from pain, sorrow, sickness, divorce, and tragedies. He does, however, promise to suffer with us, weep with us, love us, and never forsake us. And He has promise an eternal home for all who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, a home without pain, sorrow, sickness, and death.

Jesus trusted His Father completely. He put His earthly life in His heavenly Father's hands. He only expected from His Father that which His Father wanted for Him.

The key to forming the right expectations of God is to develop the mind of Christ. This is why you find the apostle Paul, who experienced all kinds of pain and sufferings, was able to praise God and be content with what God sent or allowed in his life.

Listen to Paul's account of His Christian life: "*Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst,*"

often without food, in cold and exposure" (2 Cor. 11:25-27).

Despite these hardships, you don't find Paul criticizing or doubting God's goodness, power, or love. In fact we hear Paul saying, "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. 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" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

The apostle's Paul's focus is not on himself, but on God. He lives not for personal fulfillment, but for God's glory. The bad times and hard times are the best times to glorify God. Paul lived so as to fulfill God's expectations of him, while also trusting in the promises God has made to him and all other believers.

Paul knew the promises of God and he clung to them; promises of an eternal home and rewards that can't even be described in human language. Paul didn't expect heaven on earth. He understood there would be persecution, for just as the world persecuted the Master; it will do the same to His disciples.

Are your expectations based on what you want for you and yours, or are they based on what God says in His Word? Are they Biblical expectations? Bible based expectations is what believers need.

III. Biblical Expectations

The Bible tells us what we can and cannot expect from God. We should expect nothing from God except what God tells us to expect from Him. This doesn't mean He won't exceed our expectations, but it does mean we won't be disappointed by false, unbiblical expectations.

Let's look at just a couple of expectations contained in God's Word; the Holy Spirit's indwelling and a home waiting for us in heaven.

1. Holy Spirit Indwelling

In verses 37b-39 we read "Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

When we give our life to Christ, God gives us the Holy Spirit. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

The Holy Spirit acts like a deposit from God. It shows that one day God will return to receive us to Himself. Ephesians 1:13-14 states, "In him you

also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

On the day we enter heaven, the issue won't be what kind of expectations do we have of God, for we will know Him as He is. In heaven there will no expectations, but only a heavenly satisfaction.

2. Heavenly Satisfaction

Our most important expectation should be that which has eternal value and permanence. The apostle Peter put it this way, "And for new heavens and a new earth according to His promise we do wait, in which righteousness doth dwell;" (2 Peter 3:13).

We have a promise of a new heaven and new earth. Everything from the heavens above, the earth below and the bodies we have will one day be made new. This is a promise we can look forward to. It's a promise that diminishes the pain of today.

Jesus said in John 14:2-3, "I go on to prepare a place for you; ³and if I go on and prepare for you a place, again do I come, and will receive you unto myself, that where I am ye also may be" (John 14:2-3).

Once we set foot in heaven, all our questions and former expectations on earth will seem unimportant. We won't be troubled about pain, suffering, and evil, because they will have been done away.

IV. The Power of Expectations

The power of expectations is such that it can destroy a person's faith if he or she has unrealistic expectations of God. When we expect something from God, and He doesn't deliver, Satan whispers in our ear that we should question God's goodness, God's power, and even God's existence.

The opposite is also true. When our expectations are biblical, and we see those expectations fulfilled by God, our faith grows and we become a positive influence to those around us. I've experienced both. I know the power of expectations.

Conclusion: We must expect great things from God, but they must be based on biblical truths. When we buy an appliance or a vehicle, we don't expect the company to do more for us than what the warranty says they will do. So why do so many expect more from God than what He has promised in His Word?

God has given us some mighty and wonderful promises. We don't need more from God than what He has promised. If we expect God to fulfill His promises, God will never disappoint us.

But if we expect that which is contrary to His perfect will, we will find ourselves disappointed, disillusioned, and discouraged. God's perfect will and His infallible and inerrant Word should be the

molders of our expectations about God and nothing else.

But should you find yourself disappointed with God for whatever reason, first examine your expectation. Are they realistic? Are they biblical? Then take your disappointment to God who cares about you. We can expect Him to care and be concerned about our problems and disappointments in life, for the Bible says, "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

We can expect the love of God to always be available to us. The cross forever proves His love for us. He cares so much for us that He has promised to never leave or forsake us in Hebrews 13:5.

When we expect that which God desires for us, we will never be disappointed or disillusioned.

Series: FACT OR FANTASY

Our Expectations Of God

Text: John 7:25-31, 37-52

Mobile Messages
Sharing
God's Word

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