



JUNE 2014

My Name is Expectation

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Beginning thoughts...

When my husband and I went to Hawaii a few years ago, my expectations were already high. However, when I saw how beautiful it really is, I realized my expectations had been too low. Are we like that with things in our daily lives? Do we live with low expectations, or none at all? Do we struggle day to day with just *surviving* and not *thriving*. Maybe we convince ourselves that we don't deserve good things. Life moves along in a never-ending cycle of work, sleep, work. Are we oppressed or just weighted down with obstacles that seem too heavy or cumbersome to move? If we continue to let these hindrances bind us, we will never realize our expectations. God intends for us to live Spirit-filled, abundant lives. Notice I did not say that we would be wealthy, but we will be rich in mercy, peace, love, kindness, gentleness and salvation. These are just a few of God's benefits if we are His.

When Salome went to Jesus with her request, she had great expectations that her friend would grant it. Why wouldn't He? He would be king, and she wanted her sons to sit next to Him on his throne. After all, they had been traveling together, helping others, trying to convince everyone to trust in Jesus. He often spoke of his kingdom as a treasure where all things are made new. With the living conditions around her and the fear of the soldiers there, Salome longed for this peaceful kingdom here on earth. She didn't realize Jesus was speaking of His heavenly kingdom and that He would suffer horrible torture before going back to the Father He so often mentioned.

Then news spread that Jesus had been captured and sentenced to death. Salome's sons, along with the other disciples, were in hiding, fearful of their own lives. The day of the crucifixion, Salome went with the other women to see for herself. They actually nailed Jesus to the cross, and she could do nothing about it. How heartbroken and angry she must have felt. But then came the morning of the third day when she went to the tomb to lovingly anoint the body. Wait! the stone was rolled away. Had she expected this? Jesus wasn't in the grave. Had she expected this? Confused and a little dazed, Salome heard that Jesus was alive. She realized He had been speaking of this day all along. She soon saw the Savior and realized everything was just as He said. Ladies, the Word of God is true. Let Him meet and *exceed* all of your expectations.

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OUTRAGEOUS EXPECTATIONS

Key Verse: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him” (Matthew 20:20).

Key Thought: Defeats we suffer in our Christian walks often stem from outrageous expectations we conjure up in our hearts and minds.

- Write the key verse in your journal or a notebook.
- What was the “outrageous” expectation that Salome was asking of Jesus? (for her sons to sit on either side of Jesus in His Kingdom—Matthew 20:21.)
- She had presumed this to be an earthly kingdom. What’s wrong with presumptions? (*We don’t know about tomorrow—Proverbs 27:1; They make us comfortable—Luke 12:19; Our life is brief—James 4:14.*)
- God warned against being presumptuous. (*Read 2 Peter 2:10; Deuteronomy 18:19-20; Isaiah 45:9.*)
- In wanting honor or recognition for her sons, Salome didn’t understand what she was asking. Instead, what did Jesus imply in Matthew 20:22-23? (*That they would drink of the cup of martyrdom and share His suffering.*)
- Did this statement come true? (*Yes, James was the first Apostle to be martyred and John was the last one to die after his sufferings on the Isle of Patmos.*)
- Why does Jesus give His disciples the lesson on humility in Matthew 20:25-28? (*It was important because Jesus knew what they would face after His death—Micah 6:8; Luke 22:26; Proverbs 22:4. Matthew 18:4; James 4:10.*)
- Through this encounter with Jesus, do you think that Salome received a lesson in humility, also?
- What kind of expectation did Judas have? (Money and importance—Matthew 26:14-16)
- Did he get to enjoy the money? (*Matthew 27:3-5*)
- Write these names for God in your journal: I AM, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting God and Prince of Peace.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer asking God for humility and grace to serve and honor Him. Thank Him for all of His awesome names.

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CRUMBLED EXPECTATIONS

Key Verse: “And many women were there beholding afar off...among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children” (Matthew 27:55-56).

Key Thought: Expectations require a lot of energy, thought and hope. When circumstances inside or outside our control crush these expectations, we’re left wringing our hands and nursing broken hearts.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Where do we find Salome in this verse? (*Looking on at the crucifixion of Jesus.*)
- Where was Zebedee? (*He may have been dead since Mary was one of the women following Jesus. Or, maybe, he was still fishing.*)
- Where do we find the first mention of Zebedee? (*Matthew 4:21-22*)
- Evidently, Zebedee was an influential man of means since his name is mentioned in connection with his boys. (*Matthew 10:2; Mark 1:19*)
- Did he try to stop his sons from leaving their business?
- Who was Zebedee’s partner in the fishing business? (*Simon Peter—Luke 5:10*)
- What action had Simon Peter just taken in Matthew 4:20? (*Left his nets and followed Jesus.*)
- Do you believe this was Zebedee’s expectation for his sons?
- Where did James and John leave Zebedee? (*In the boat—Matthew 4:22*)
- What do you think Zebedee’s reaction was to their leaving? (*Since they immediately followed Jesus, I believe he praised God.*)
- Why are teachings of godly parents long lasting? (*Proverbs 22:6; Isaiah 38:19; Deuteronomy 6:6-8, 11:19.*)
- Do you think Zebedee and Salome, as Jewish parents, had obeyed these Scriptures?
- Salome witnessed the crucifixion. Do you think she realized then the impact of her request to Jesus? (*Mark 15:40-41*)

(Mark 15:40,41) Write this term for Christ: *Bread of Life* in your journal.

Reflection: Close in prayer. Thank God for taking our brokenness and making us whole.

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NO EXPECTATIONS

Key Verse: *“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7).*

Key Thought: Our world, the Christian community included, is filled with women who have no expectation or hope to hold on to or grab hold of. God calls us to this mission field of broken people—a field that includes ourselves.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Have you been *justified*? (*Romans 5:1; Philippians 3:9*)
- Are you thankful for His *grace*? (*Acts 15:11; 1 Timothy 1:14*)
- Does knowing you are an *heir* make you excited? (*Titus 3:7*)
- Is *hope* part of your vocabulary? (*Hebrews 6:19; Colossians 1:5*)
- How do you like the words *eternal life*? (*John 3:15; Galatians 6:8*)
- Do you feel there are no expectations in your life? Why or why not?
- Go over all the questions and answers on p. 17 of *Treasure*.
- Did Salome stop following Jesus when He didn't give her the answer she desired? (*No, in fact she was at His crucifixion and at the tomb after His Resurrection. Read Mark 16:1.*)
- Salome wanted honor for her sons. How do you react when your child or someone you love is honored? Or passed over for an honor?
- If you could, would you prevent suffering in your child's life? Why or why not?
- When do you “let go” of your child as a mother?
- Do you ever claim Proverbs 22:6 over your children?
- What are some of the parental duties the Bible records for parents? (*To teach—Isaiah 28:9; Deuteronomy 6:7; to provide for—2 Corinthians 12:14; to nurture—Ephesians 6:4; to control—1 Timothy 3:4; to love—Titus 2:4.*)
- Had Salome and Zebedee fulfilled their duties toward their sons? (*Most definitely. Think of the impact the Book of John has had down through the centuries and, how James taught and preached as an apostle.*)
- Write the name for Christ: *Our Hope* in your journal.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer and praise for the God of our hope and salvation.

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EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS

Key Verse: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20).

Key Thought: Small granules of faith—as small as the particles of spice she carried—were all Salome had as she approached the garden tomb. Were they enough? Oh, yes! Praise the Lord, faith is always enough.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Go over the questions and answers on p. 19 in *Treasure*.
- What do you think of Philippians 4:19? Do you believe He will supply all your needs?
- Do we settle for our needs?
- Are your expectations for events or wants high or low?
- Our key verse says “the power that worketh in us”. What is that power? (*The Holy Spirit—Acts 1:8; Luke 4:14; Zechariah 4:6*)
- Do you understand the Holy Spirit? (*Read Romans 8.*)
- What does Romans 8:31 give you? (*Confidence in God.*)
- Are blessings and abundance the same thing? (*Malachi 3:10; Matthew 6:33; Luke 6:38.*)
- Scriptures provide us with examples of God’s super abundance. (*Matthew 14:20; Joel 2:24; Deuteronomy 2:7; 2 Kings 4:6-7.*)
- Let’s look at some incidences where God met or exceeded expectations. (*Paul—Philippians 1:20; David—Psalm 62:5-7; Abraham—Genesis 21:2; Romans 4:18; Moses—Exodus 14:21-22.*)
- When did Salome realize that her expectations for her sons were better than she had asked for? (*Mark 16:6*)
- Can’t you just see the light bulb go on in Salome’s head when she remembered Jesus’ teaching? (*John 14:1-4, 27-28.*)
- How do these verses meet your expectations?
- Write the entire Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) in your journal.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer, thanking the *Faithful and True* witness, the *Amen*.

Closing thoughts...

We may ask why Salome would confront Jesus with this request for her sons. But don't be too hard on her. Think about it. Don't we all want the very best for our children and grandchildren? Don't we sign them up for sports, drama classes, beauty walks, dance classes, music lessons, etc.? Of course, we do. And there's not anything wrong with wanting them to master and do well in these areas. We are a competitive culture, we love for our school, our teams, our friends, our family, or children to be the winners. Jesus doesn't pull for one over the other. His plans are for all of us to prosper and know His peace in our daily lives. He gives us that assurance in Jeremiah 29:11. Why then, should it bother us if someone else does better than the ones we want to succeed? Don't let pride get in the way of being happy for others. Jesus is the earnest hope of a secure future with Him for those who have accepted Him and live for Him. I think Salome was so thankful she knew Jesus and that she had taught her sons to know and love Him. He knew their names when He called to them. Aren't we all thankful they got out of the boat? Nothing can ever be accomplished unless we are willing to "get out of the boat" and follow Jesus.