

Great Expectations

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[0 : 00] John chapter 14, if you want to stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together, beginning in verse 7 and going through verse 14.

! And he says,

And there we see that Philip failed to see.

And he wanted to feed them.

[10 : 13] And he saw this moment as an opportunity to test Philip's faith. Look at John 6, 5 through 7.

Philip is a realist. Philip looks. He takes stock of the situation. He does some quick mental calculations in his mind.

And he determines that, you know what, this situation, Jesus is hopeless. But it isn't. Because Jesus can do what seems impossible to us.

And again, Philip was there to experience that miracle. He was there. He saw what Jesus did. But his question in verse 8 reveals that to this point he had failed to fully recognize that in Jesus he had come to see and know God.

And so he asks for what seems to be a reasonable request. At least in his mind. He's asking, Jesus, just peel back the curtain.

[11 : 45] Just a little bit. Like Moses. Give us just a little glimpse. See the fringes of God's glory.

And you know what, Jesus, that'll be enough. We won't be troubled anymore. We'll be okay. Just give us a little sign. Have you ever prayed like that before?

And be honest. Have you ever prayed like that before? God, just give me a sign. Just give me a sign. Have you ever taken your Bible and just turned it open to some random place and stuck your finger on a verse and treated God's word as if it was some kind of crystal ball?

Or as if that was the way that God best speaks to us today through his word? I know you've done it. I've done it too. But you know, the Bible is not a fortune cookie. And ripping a text out of its context without studying his word at all is not the way to hear from God.

[13 : 08] It's not the way to receive a sign. And so Jesus' reply in verse 9 reveals his frustration. He's frustrated by this request.

And Philip is speaking, but it's the rest of the disciples who Jesus answers. Because you there in verse 9 is in the plural, not in the singular. And so he's talking to all of them and addressing the fact that all of them are of the same mind with Philip.

But Philip asked the question. So he addresses Philip, but he's speaking to them all. And in Jesus' reply there, we learn that Jesus expects his disciples to know who he truly is.

Jesus expects his disciples to know who he truly is. And so Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long and you still don't know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, how can you say, show us the Father? Father, it's like Jesus is saying here to his disciples, are you for real right now?

[14 : 21] Are you for real? Are we really about to have this conversation? How could you after all this time, how could you after all that you have seen me do and say, ask this question?

Come on. Come on. I expect that at this point your faith in me would be greater than what it is at this point.

That Jesus expects his disciples to know who he truly is at this point is again expressed by the Greek word that is used there for see or seen.

Jesus says, whoever has seen me has seen the Father. So, you know, the New Testament was originally written in the Greek. And in the Greek, there are at least three words that can be translated as see or saw or seeing.

And so in our Bible, whenever those three words are present, we usually use one of those words. But we lose the understanding sometimes of what kind of seeing is taking place.

[15:26] So, for example, later in John's Gospel, six chapters later, all three of those words, or at least three of those words translated as see in English, are used to describe what Peter and John saw when they arrived at Jesus's empty tomb.

In John 20, if you remember, Mary Magdalene reports to the disciples that Jesus's body is not in the tomb. And so Peter and John raced to the site to see for themselves.

John outdistanced Peter. And he arrived at the scene first. And John, if you remember, stooped to look in. He didn't go in, but he looked in.

And the Bible says that he saw the linen cloths that Jesus's body had been wrapped with lying there. But again, he didn't go in.

And there saw, in the Greek, is blepo, which is the most basic Greek word used to describe seeing anything. And so John looked and he saw, again, that the cloths that were wrapped around Jesus's body were not anymore.

[16:42] And the body was gone. And the cloths were folded up nicely and neatly. Then Peter arrives. And Peter, being Peter, is courageous.

And he walks into the tomb. John's stooping there looking in. Peter walks in. And there, Peter sees. And the Greek word there for see is theoreo.

Theorize, our English word. It means to puzzle out or to puzzle over or to scrutinize. And so what Peter is doing is he goes in. He sees the body's gone. The grave clothes are folded together nicely. And so he's trying to, in his mind, figure out how does this fit together? If the body was stolen, all of the spices that were in the wrapping, they would have been spilt everywhere.

And so he's trying to theorize. He's trying to rationalize what he's seeing with what he thinks he knows. And so then at this point, John goes into the tomb with Peter.

[17:52] And John saw. And there, the Greek word for saw is oreo. Which means to see with understanding. Understanding. So John goes in.

He saw that the only thing that could account for Jesus' missing body and the arrangements of the grave clothes was that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

So oreo, this is a seeing that means believing. I believe what I see. And so in verse 9 of John 14, where we're at, that is the word that Jesus is using.

Oreo. He means to say, what he's saying to his disciples is, Those who truly see me are those who have perceived God fully.

Philip wanted a sign. He wanted to be shown God. But Jesus replies that he was seeing God. I'm here before you.

[18:58] Those who truly know who Jesus is perceive God. They know God. They see God. Philip and the disciples wanted a demonstration when what they really needed was an apprehension.

And so I ask you, how do you see Jesus today? Do you truly know him? Are you trying to puzzle it out?

You know that, yeah, he was a real person. People talk about the fact that he rose from the dead. I'm not sure that I believe that. But has the truth of who he is fully apprehended you?

That you know and you believe that he is God. You see, the Bible says that everyone knows that God exists. Everyone.

However, sin darkens their understanding of who he truly is. Romans 1, 21 through 23 say, For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to God, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[20:09] Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. You see what sinful humanity does?

Because it hates the thought of a God who is holy. A God who will hold them accountable for their sin. And so what they do is they give God a new image.

A new image. They imagine a God who is more to their liking. A God who is formed and fashioned by their feelings and by their opinions.

A God who not only excuses their sins, but approves of them. And so in reality, what men do, sinful men do, is that they who have been created in God's image, create God in their own image.

They become their own determiner of truth. They follow their heart. You ever heard that expression before? I'm sure that you have.

[21 : 12] Just follow your heart. And I'll tell you that Jesus never said to follow your heart. Jesus said, follow me. Because he knew, as scripture says in Jeremiah 17, 9, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick.

Those who truly know Jesus know that he is God. He has fully revealed him. And understand, he didn't claim to be anything less than that or other than that.

And he expects those who know that, who he has revealed that to, to not question that. Because there are many false views of Christ out there.

Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses. They believe in Jesus, but not as he's revealed himself in his word. They say that he's another God or a lesser God.

They deny the Trinity. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet. But they do not believe that he was God. Throughout history, and still today, people are drawn to Jesus as an exemplary moral person.

[22 : 23] A virtuous man or a religious teacher. But he claimed to be so much more than that. He didn't say that he was just one way to God or one source of truth.

Or one way for a person to be saved. He said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. And how each person reacts to his claim determines their eternal destiny.

Jesus said in John 8, 24. I told you that you would die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am he. I am God. I am the Messiah. You will die in your sins.

And then in Matthew 7, 21 through 23. Jesus talks about a coming day of judgment. A day when many, tragically, on that day will say that they knew him.

But they will hear from him. Depart from me. Because you never truly knew me. You never fully knew me. You did not believe in who I said that I am.

[23 : 30] And so as Christians. Those who have been truly saved by Christ. Who truly know who he is. Jesus expects that you not be deceived.

Into believing or be accepting of something about him. That contradicts his claims to be one with the father. He continues to press that truth into the minds.

And into the hearts of his disciples. In verses 10 through 11. Do you not believe that I am in the father. And the father is in me. The words that I say to you.

I do not speak on my own authority. But the father who dwells in me does his work. Believe me.

That I am in the father. And the father is in me. Or else believe on account of the works themselves.

And so again Jesus goes over the question of his oneness with the father. And he reiterates once more. That to see him is to see the father.

[24 : 33] To know him is to know the father. He is in the father. And the father is in him. And he says the evidence to support my claim is plentiful.

Jesus was calling his disciples to remember his words. He was calling his disciples to remember his miracles. And to believe in him. And that in believing in who he truly was.

They would not be troubled. Their troubles would dissipate. By being reminded that he is truly God. And it was time for them.

Jesus expected them to know that. To believe that. And to understand that in a life changing way. And so after having expressed his expectations.

That his disciples know who he truly is. Jesus then we see. Reveals to us that he expects his disciples to believe in his mission. He expects his disciples to believe in his mission.

[25 : 35] Verse 12. Truly truly I say to you. Whoever believes in me. Will also do the works that I do. And greater works than these will he do.

Because I am going to the father. Now that's a staggering statement. Isn't it? The person who knows Christ truly.

Who believes in him. Will do the works that he has done. And greater works than these. What does that mean?

Can we walk on water? Can we control the weather? Well there's some people like Kenneth Copeland who think that you can. Can we turn water into wine?

Or maybe you know Dr. Pepper or Diet Coke if that's your beverage of choice. Can we create something out of nothing? No.

[26 : 36] Obviously no. That's why some of you are laughing. Because we'll never be greater than Jesus. We'll never be greater than Jesus. We'll never be on par with Jesus' greatness. He is God.

We are not. So what does this mean? What does this mean? Well I think the clue is in the second half of the statement. That Jesus says he's going to the father.

See his ministry took place in the region of Palestine. But after his resurrection and after his ascension. To heaven. He promised. That the Holy Spirit would come.

That's exactly what happened. The disciples then would share the gospel.

And they would reach the Gentiles outside of Palestine. The number of believers after Jesus' resurrection and ascension was in the hundreds.

[27 : 35] But then the disciples would go out and they'd share the gospel. And it was soon into the thousands of those who believed. And now today it's in the millions. As the gospel continues to go and be shared.

And people come to faith in Jesus Christ. So this doesn't mean greater works in power. But greater works in extent. Jesus continues to save.

He continues to be at work. To spread the gospel through his spirit. Which indwells us. Now look at verses 13 and 14. Whatever you ask in my name.

This I will do. That the father may be glorified in the son. Verse 14. If you ask me anything. In my name. I will do it.

Now here's what we would like to do. With these two verses. We would like to forget about verse 13. And just hold on to verse 14.

[28 : 38] If you ask me anything in my name. I will do it. Like the word of faith movement. Those who think that they can name it and claim it.

Or they can blab it and grab it. They treat his name as if it was some kind of a magic word. I can attach Jesus' name to whatever I want at the end of a prayer.

And I'll get that. And they treat Jesus like a genie. Instead of treating Jesus like God. But verse 13 establishes the parameters for verse 14.

As do all of the previous verses. The motivation for our prayers is that the father be glorified in the son. Not you.

You see that? I didn't always see that. As a child. There was an action figure. That I really, really desperately wanted.

[29 : 40] But you know what? Every other kid desperately wanted the same toy. And so I would pray that when I went to the store with my parents.

That that toy would be in the aisle. And I'd finally be able to buy it and to take it home. But time and time again we would go to the store. And that toy wasn't there.

Then one Sunday I went to church. And I heard John 14, 14. Aha! Right?

I've been doing this prayer thing all wrong. I've forgotten the magic words. In Jesus' name. And so the next time.

We're going to the store. I offer my prayer. And I close. In Jesus' name. And in case he didn't hear it.

[30 : 41] In Jesus' name again. Right? And we get to the store. And we get to the toy aisle. And my hopes are up. And guess what?

Guess what? Wasn't there. It wasn't there. And you know as confusing and as disappointing as that was for me as a child. Today I thank God that he did not answer that prayer.

You know why? Because that's the way I would have viewed him. You, God, serve me. Instead of realizing that no, I've been created to serve you.

And it's in serving you that my life finds its meaning and its purpose and its joy. Not the other way around. We were created not for this world but for another.

But Jesus is stating here another expectation in regard to our prayers. He expects that we believe in his mission.

[31 : 40] He does expect that we be people of prayer. And that we pray that his kingdom would advance. He expects us to make big prayers.

That ask for big results. He expects us who truly know him to live our lives on mission for him. He expects us as a church to become a city on a hill.

A light that dispels darkness. He expects that we will go and make disciples by sharing the gospel. And we should expect that as we do, that is what will happen.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that? Jesus tells you to right here. Right here he tells you to. And you know, haven't we seen that recently happen in our church?

This past summer, as we were preparing to send our kids to kids camp and to Falls Creek for the first time that anyone could remember in years. And I remember that Sunday, many of you came right up here.

[32 : 43] On your knees, on your knees, in prayer, that God would be at work in our young people's lives. That those who weren't saved would be saved. That those who were saved would be called to ministry, potentially.

And man, we saw God answer that prayer. Saw people get baptized. We saw them return and give their testimonies about what God had done.

And for us, that seemed like a big prayer. But God answered it. And so we shouldn't stop praying. Let's, in fact, expand the parameters of those prayers.

To Bartlesville. To our state. To our nation. And beyond. And let's be persistent in those prayers. Now we know that it is God who saves. He is sovereign in that. But we know that he chooses us. As he does that.

[33 : 58] And so he expects. That in your knowing him. That you live your life. Believing in his mission.

He expects that in knowing him. Your life be totally changed. That you would live your life on mission.

For him. Now that may involve foreign missions. But it doesn't have to. Right now. Wherever you are. That is your mission field.

That is your place to serve your king. And so you pray. Ambitiously. You pray. Boldly. You pray. Courageously. God.

Use me. In this place. To make a difference. For. You. The good news. The good news of who Jesus truly is.

[34 : 56] And what he has truly done to save sinners. And give them eternal life. He expects you. To believe in his mission.

And to be involved. In it. And so that's my invitation for you this morning. Last week it was that you would bring your troubles to him. This week is.

Is that you would start making those. Big. Prayers. Ambitious. Prayers. Believing in his mission. And desiring to be used by him. To do it. And so when we come at the end of these series of verses. What is the thing. That God wants us to understand.

And to apply to our lives. Well I think it's this. Jesus expects that those who know him. Will live on mission with God. Will live on mission with him.

[35 : 50] If you know him. It should have transformed you. It changes you. Your desires have changed. Your will has changed. The things that you want. Have changed.

And God wants you to be a part of his mission. You know the disciples were a small group. Of uneducated men. But they trusted Jesus.

They believed in his mission. And they were used by him. To spread the gospel far. And to spread it wide. Do you believe. That Jesus desires to use.

You. To do the same today. Do you believe that he desires. To use our church. To do the same. Today. I hope that you do.

Application questions. For our community groups. Or just for you to look over. Later on at some time. As you look back over this passage. I encourage you to do that. Number one. What are the dangers for you.

[36 : 50] In the church. If either fails to grasp. Who Jesus truly is. What are the dangers. If we don't fully realize. Fully grasp. Who Jesus truly is.

For us. As individuals. And collectively. As a church. Question number two. What incorrect views. Of prayer. Have you held before? Why does God.

Encourage us to pray? What does prayer. Achieve? Question number three. How have you seen God.

Answer prayer. In big ways. That astonished you. Astonished you. And are there prayers. That you asked. That you were later grateful. That God.

Didn't answer. And then lastly. And this is. This is one. That you know. You guys can talk about it. In your group tonight.

[37 : 46] But I. This is for you. For you. And I'm asking you. This question. In hopes that you will. Will you commit today.

Will you commit today. To start praying. Fervently. And consistently. That God will use you. And this church. To live on mission. For him. In greater ways. Than before. Will you make that.

Commitment today. Fervently. And consistently. To pray. That God would use you. And our church. To be. On mission for him. Like it's never.

Been. Before. Now one of my heroes. Of the faith. Is Charles Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon. Was a pastor. In England. In the 1800s.

He would preach to. Crowds of 10,000. At times. Was an amazing man. Who did a lot of. Amazing things. For the Lord.

[38 : 47] And people wanted to know. What his secret was. And so they would come. To visit his church. And they would ask him. That question. Or they would allude. To that question. What is the secret?

And he always loved. To take those. With that question. Down to the basement. Of his church. And in the basement. Of his church. Were two to three hundred. People. Two to three hundred. Church members.

On their knees. Fervently in prayer. Do you believe. Do you believe. What Jesus expects you to believe.

Will you commit. To be about the things. That he expects. You to be about. Today. I hope that you will. I'm going to pray. I'm going to have. We'll have our invitation.

I encourage you. To begin that commitment. Today. Where you're at. Up here. Doesn't matter to me. But I just want you. To be praying. Let's pray. Lord God.

[39 : 44] Thank you. For your word. Lord. Forgive us. That. So often. We. Allow. Troubles. In this world. We allow.

Ourselves. To get distracted. By those. Or. Or. Whenever. We're challenged. For what we believe. To even be. In a place. Where we. We can question.

What we know. What you've revealed. To us. God. We know. That we're not. Any different. From your disciples. Back then. You can look out. Across our congregation.

And see the exact same thing. And ask the exact same question. How can you not. At this point. Fully understand. Who I am. And how can that.

Knowledge. Not. To this point. Completely change your lives. Forgive us God. And help us. Lord. We know what you expect.

[40 : 38] And we know that you are good. And you are a gracious God. Who desires. To use your people. To accomplish your mission. To do so in ways.

That remind us of. The fact that we were made. For another world. That you've prepared. An eternal place. For us. For us. For us. For there is great joy.

To be had. And following you. And seeing you. Use us. To make a difference. In this world. God. We pray for that. We pray that you would use this church.

That we would take seriously your expectations. And that you would use us in ways. That bring glory and honor to the name of Jesus Christ. And we pray these things.

In Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.