

# Weaving the Word

## What Do You Expect?

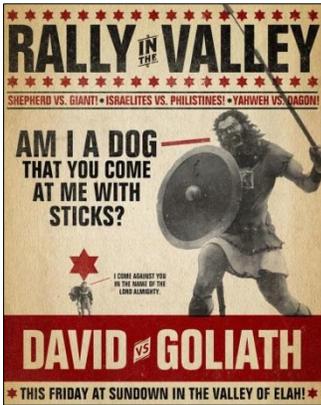
Part 77 – August 13, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning to lower our unrealistic expectations.



**How often does God disappoint you? Let's face it; He's the direct agent of our most devastating disappointments in life.**

When Jesus went home to those who knew and loved Him most, "they took offense at Him." (Mt 13:57; Mk 6:3)



**Why? He was a disgusting disappointment. Why?**

**He failed to meet their expectations.**

They thought the Son of David was coming to conquer their giants and establish an *earthly kingdom*.

Know what God's problem is? **His execution always exceeds our expectation;** because, **we hope for too little;** because, we can't imagine.



**It's never that He's not doing enough.**

**He's always doing too much ... for us to comprehend.**

**He just can't measure down to our standards.**

Sea of Galilee countryside

And he was amazed at their **lack of faith**. [Due to an **abundance** of expectations] Then Jesus went around through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom [trying to **raise** and **realign** their expectations] and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed [by the religious rulers who condemned Him as not the One they expected to come] and **helpless**, [lit. cast down; thrown to the ground. Like they tried to do to Him for disappointing them back home] like sheep without a shepherd. [Weary. Confused. Distressed.] – Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 6:6 NIV



**The deadliest expectations are those we place on God.**

There's no greater danger than building your faith on theological expectations that collapse in a crisis; whether death, divorce, addiction, illness, custody, bankruptcy, or prison.

**Our faith is often derailed when God disappoints us.**



This is exactly what John the Baptist is facing while awaiting his fate in prison after proclaiming Jesus as *the One who was to come*. (Jn 1:30; Acts 19:4)



But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said ... Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ... after me will come one who is more powerful than I ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit *and with fire*. – Matthew 3:7-11 NIV



John had no idea how God would look when He arrived. He could only imagine ... which of course *he couldn't* ... which is why, when his cousin Jesus came to be baptized, he tried to change His cousin's plans. (Mt 3:13-15)

**He excels in appearing in ways we least expect.**

After this, John starts calling Him the *Lamb* of God, and says:

(Top: Bethabara, where John Baptized

This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." I *myself* did not know him ... – John 1:30-31 NIV

**He knew Jesus; but, he didn't recognize Him as the One. Why?**

For one very profound reason: **his cousin didn't behave like God; God behaved like his cousin.** And, no one saw *that One* coming! But, even now, **knowing He's the One, they still assume He'll change His ways to fit their well-established expectations.** And, so ...

John's disciples told him about all these things. [That Jesus did that didn't mesh with what they thought He'd do] When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, Calling two of them, he sent his disciples to the Lord to ask, him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" – Matthew 11:2-3; Luke 7:18-19 NIV



**The only time that God will ever disappoint us, is when we expect Him to be someone He isn't or do something He won't.**

Ever wait for someone to show up, who didn't; and you were disappointed ... until you realized that *you* had the wrong day, time, or place?

**How often do you suppose you do this with Jesus? Every time He disappoints you!**

But, this is where faith is so often derailed. **In our disappointment we feel abandoned; but, instead of asking why, we abandon Him.** However, **faith isn't trusting God to meet our expectations, true faith is trusting God to do what's right in spite of them.**

And this often means confronting our disappointment *with God*, and seeking His strength and clarity as He leads us through it.



When my daughter was young, she wanted to go to the Hillcrest Haunted Forest. But, when we got there it was too scary, even if she held my hand. So, she decided that *I* should go through it alone while she waited at the exit; then I could tell her about it after I made it out.

That's what it's like down here. A haunted forest with Dad.

**“Lord, how about You go through it by yourself, and we’ll meet up at the exit?”**

Pain and suffering aren't even the real issue. **It's the fear and confusion that gets us.** That's why we love our expectations. **We can withstand almost any affliction if it makes sense as an act of love and sacrifice:** a soldier throwing himself on a grenade; a mother running into a home engulfed in flames.

You see, **fear and confusion come from unmet expectations.** And, **unmet expectations come from misunderstanding God.** When we're disappointed by people or circumstances we can run to Him. **But, where do you turn when God lets you down? His Word.** John isn't accusing Jesus of not being the One who was to come. He's asking for understanding in the midst of fear and confusion.

**When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?’” – Luke 7:20 NIV**

John is asking Jesus if He's the fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-3.

**“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. – Malachi 3:1-2 NIV**



That sounds way more like a fire-god than a lamb. But, the truth is, **He came to refine us and cleanse us by His blood and Spirit and Word (not an actual blast furnace and a scrubbing).**



So many have angrily resisted for so long, because **He failed to meet their expectations, and they failed to pursue His reasons.** But, instead of seeking to realign *their mind* by the washing of *His Word*, **they continue to hold Him accountable to their narrow view.**

**It is the height of arrogance to judge and convict the Creator, without ever examining the evidence, or listening to His side.**

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. **Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.**” – Matthew 11:4-6; Luke 7:20-23 NIV

**When would *anyone* fall away on account of Jesus?**

**When He’s not what they expect.**

Jesus and John are speaking a foreign language. Not Greek. Not Aramaic. Not Hebrew.

**The language of the Lord is Scripture.**

John asks about Malachi 3:1-2, and Jesus tells him to check out Isaiah 35:3-8. Of course, if John didn’t have ears to hear, Jesus would’ve just been wasting His breath with unknown tongues.

Say to those with fearful hearts, **[like John in prison]** “Be strong, do not fear; **your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.**” **[But, not how you expect. So, watch for the evidence]** **Then** will the **eyes** of the **blind** be **opened** and the **ears** of the **deaf unstopped**. Then will the **lame leap** like a deer, and the **mute tongue shout for joy**. Water will gush forth **in the wilderness** **[where the Word of God had come to John (Lk 3:2)]** and streams **in the desert**. **[Where John had baptized, (Mk 1:4) and had been “a voice of one calling in the desert” saying “Prepare the way”, (Mt 3:2) “the crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth” (Lk 3:5)]** ... And **a highway will be there;** **[It’s God’s Word as seen through God’s Lamb]** it will be called the Way of Holiness. **The unclean will not journey on it;** **[remember that launderer’s soap?]** **it will be for those who walk in that Way** **[as opposed to those who expect the Lord to walk *their way*]** ... – Isaiah 35:3b-8 NIV



**Who can endure his coming? Who can stand? Those who lean not on their own expectations, but trust in the Lord to recalibrate ‘em according to His Word.**

Like John, in prison, awaiting his fate, and receiving clarity from Jesus, along with a love that drives out fear; like a soldier facing a grenade; or, a mom in those fiery flames.

Then, whether death, divorce, addiction, illness, custody, bankruptcy, or prison, *you* will be able to endure and even to stand and say:

Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him ... – Job 13:15 NIV

Which was, undoubtedly, the final conclusion of John.