

Sermon - Great Expectations – John the Baptist

Pastor Ed Blonski | December 4, 2022

Expectations

We are continuing this message series called “Great Expectations.” Today, we take a look at John the Baptist.

There is a mostly blank paper that was offered to you, for you to fill out with questions and comments during this message.

When we talk about expectations, I realize that we all have them.

We All Have Them

When you start a new position, new grade, or move to a new location – you have certain expectations, right?

Expectations about a new job – that you’ll be qualified for the job, enjoy the job, be successful at it.

Expectations about the next grade level – that you’ll learn new things, get good grades, and graduate to the next grade level at the end of the year.

Expectations after a move – that you’ll make new friends, enjoy your new home, and still remain close to your old friends.

Surprised by the Negative Thought of Expectations

We all have expectations, no matter who we are and no matter where we are.

But I was surprised at the negativity of expectations that I found on the internet.

i. “Expectation is the root of all heartache.”

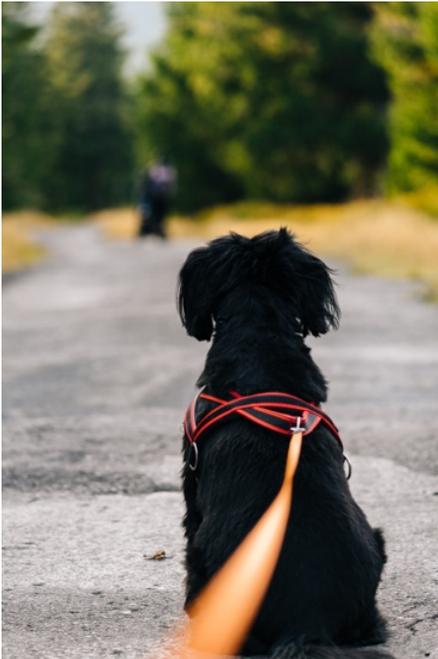
There is a quote that is very often thrown about that says, “Expectation is the root of all heartache.” Usually when you see it you are reading an essay or blog about expectations never being met in a life-partner or romantic relationship.



You also usually see it attributed to William Shakespeare – but if you go looking through Shakespeare’s works with the expectation of finding the play or sonnet the line comes from, you will be disappointed.

It turns out that Shakespeare didn’t write it!

One Dictionary’s Definition



I dug a little deeper and found one dictionary’s definition of expectation.

“To consider probable or certain”

i. Which is it? Probable or Certain?

It says that the word means “to consider [something or someone] as probable or certain.”

So, which is it? Probable? Or certain?

You can’t expect it to be both!

The Origin of the Word

Expectationem = awaiting (something or someone)

I found it helpful to get to the root of the word.

Its origin is in the Latin word expectationem. And this word means “awaiting” someone or something.

This would certainly describe our Great Expectations person for today – John the Baptist.

John the Baptist

He was expected

i. Elizabeth & Zechariah

John the Baptist was certainly expected. Luke 1:13 tells us that his parents Elizabeth and Zechariah had been praying for a child and at long last their prayers were going to be answered!

He was expecting

i. The Messiah

John the Baptist was also certainly expecting – the Messiah. Somehow, somehow – most likely because the Holy Spirit revealed it to him – he knew when it was finally time for the Messiah!



His Expectations Provided His Message

So, as John the Baptist expected the Messiah to come in his lifetime, his message and calling were inspired accordingly!

He proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins!

He did this in the wilderness around the Jordan River and for long enough to gather disciples around himself, among whom were Andrew, James and John.

His Disciples Shift to Jesus

Yet, when John baptized Jesus and pointed Him out as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” his disciples began to follow Jesus.

What Did He Expect to Happen after Jesus?

What did John expect after that?

After all, it seemed as if his mission was over. The Messiah was here, his disciples were becoming Jesus’ disciples. What else was there to do?

i. Still Preached

Apparently, John still preached. Fire and brimstone. Calling out sin and sinners. That is, until he called out Herod Antipas for his immorality.

ii. Arrested

John was arrested and imprisoned. It seems that while Herod didn't really care about what John said about him, Herod's wife did and was embarrassed that the truth was being told so forcefully – the truth that she divorced Herod's half-brother to marry him.

iii. Waiting in Prison (reached out to Jesus one last time)

While John was in prison, he sent what disciples he had left to Jesus to get one last confirmation that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah that John expected He was.

iv. Executed (Martyred)

Soon after, Herod had John executed and all of John's expectations came to an end.

Jesus Met and Far Exceeded John's Expectations

But before John was killed, he received the confirmation from Jesus he was looking for.

He was the Messiah John was expecting

Jesus reaffirmed to John that He was the Messiah John – and so many others – were expecting.

He was more than John – and nearly everyone – was expecting

i. Matthew 11:3-6

Not only did Jesus meet John's expectations, Jesus surpassed them!

Jesus was the King from the royal line of David promised so long ago.

But Jesus was also the Savior first promised to Adam and Eve. Jesus not only brought the Word of God to people as Isaiah had foretold, He brought God's Salvation through His shed blood on the cross.

Jesus also brought an end to death by rising from the dead on Easter morning!

That's what Jesus does – He meets and surpasses all expectations!

Your Expectations

Of Those Who Proclaim Jesus

What are your expectations, you who are called to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior of all?

Of Following Jesus

What are your expectations, you who are a follower of Jesus?

Being a Member of Jesus' Church

What are your expectations, you who are a member of Jesus' bride, the Holy Christian Church and our little corner of it, St. Matthew Lutheran?

Be a Voice of Expectations to the World

Be a voice of expectations to the world!

Tell the world that the Lord is doing the unexpected.

Our world and many churches do not expect God's grace in Baptism.

Few people expect forgiveness of sin in the Lord's Supper.

People outside Christ do not expect the fellowship we know from being baptized into Christ's death and resurrection.

Even we who are new creatures in Christ do not always expect the abundance of his gifts in our congregations.

So, remember this: grace is the first and essential spiritual gift.

Peace is the result of God's grace indwelling in us.

Our good Lord establishes peace by declaration.

We have the peace of quiet assurance that our Lord cares for us in all things.

We are enriched with gifts of speaking and knowledge.

And we are called to be His voice in this world!

Be the voice of unexpected expectations in the world!

Tell them that the Lord will do the unexpected.



The Lord who has established the pattern of unexpected goodness to us will make his and our joy complete.

The Holy Spirit will continue to gift our congregation.

The Lord will keep us strong in the faith.

Jesus will do the unexpected when He returns in the same manner as He ascended.

John was comforted to know that Jesus met and exceed his expectations.

I pray that you also will be comforted knowing that.

And that you will be the voice of expectation to this world!