

Title: Expectations in the Tug of War: Letting God Be Enough

Sermon Summary: This sermon, part of a series on spiritual "tug of war," examines how unmet expectations create conflict in our lives and our walk with God. The pastor draws from Mark 5 and 6 to illustrate how even Jesus encountered skepticism, mockery, and lack of faith from those closest to him, yet remained faithful to the Father's will. The central challenge presented is whether believers are willing to surrender their personal expectations, desires, and assumptions to God, trusting that he is sufficient for every need. The sermon calls the congregation to move beyond head knowledge into experiential faith, and to stop letting emotions and unmet expectations derail their relationship with Christ. The recurring theme is that God's faithfulness is certain and his promises are sure, regardless of circumstances, and that the believer's greatest anchor in any tug of war is Christ himself.

Key Points:

- Experiential knowledge of God, as reflected in the Greek, is deeper than mere head knowledge, and true faith involves walking with God and putting his promises into action
- All people carry expectations rooted in desire, assumption, perceived fairness, or comparison, and these expectations frequently cause conflict when they go unmet
- When believers accept Christ, they often carry worldly expectations into their faith, expecting a charmed life rather than a life of faithful dependence on God
- Jesus himself likely carried human expectations, yet he responded to mockery, rejection, and unbelief with continued faithfulness rather than retaliation or retreat
- The lack of faith among the people in Jesus' hometown actually limited the miracles he was able to perform there, illustrating that faith has a direct relationship to what God is able to do in and through a community
- Believers are called not to suppress emotion but to refuse to be controlled by emotion, bringing every feeling back to Christ and the Holy Spirit
- The church collectively may be limiting what God wants to do through it by

remaining wrapped up in personal expectations and a spiritually neutral lifestyle

- Surrendering expectations to God and letting him be the expectation is the pathway to experiencing his sufficiency, captured in the phrase "honey in the rock"

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 5:38 through Mark 6:13, covering the raising of Jairus's daughter, Jesus' rejection in his hometown of Nazareth, and the sending out of the twelve disciples

Stories:

- A boy struggling in math is transferred to a Catholic school, where seeing a crucifix on his first day motivates him to take his studies seriously, believing the school is serious about math
- The account of Jairus's daughter, in which mourners laugh at Jesus when he says the girl is only sleeping, and Jesus then raises her from the dead with only the parents and three disciples present
- Jesus returning to his hometown synagogue to teach, only to be met with offense and skepticism from those who knew him as a carpenter and the son of Mary, resulting in very few miracles being performed due to their lack of faith
- A personal story about a Christian acquaintance who urged the pastor to invest in Google in the 1990s, which the pastor declined, later recognizing it as a missed opportunity tied to not listening to sound counsel
- A reference to the pastor's childhood memory of jumping off a hay wagon from great height into his father's arms without fear, used as an illustration of childlike trust and faith
- A friend who worked for a tool and die shop, proposed adopting CAD technology, was dismissed by his employer, went out on his own, and eventually secured multi-million dollar military contracts, illustrating the cost of refusing to receive new insight