

Expectation

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Preacher: Andrew Longwe

[0 : 00] We all live with expectations. Be that we have expectations of our family, our parents, or our parents have expectations of us as our children.

We have expectations of our employer and they have expectations of us as their employee. We live with expectations. And even today, many will live with great expectation at what will happen today at Centre Court at Wimbledon as Andy Murray plays in the final.

Many people will wait with expectation as Andy Murray, Britain's number one, will play Novak Djokovic, the world's number one.

And will this be the time that Andy Murray wins the first Wimbledon title for 77 years since Britain last won a men's champion. I've been waiting for the last few years with great expectation, but maybe today will be the day.

And I say that really by way of introduction because today we're looking at the theme of expectation. Today we come to the end of a four-part series we've been looking at called Disciples in the Dock.

[1 : 14] Key questions that Jesus asked his disciples in the Gospels. Some of you might remember that we began our study a month ago or so. We began by looking at Jesus' question, what about you?

Who do you say I am from Mark's Gospel? Then we looked at Jesus' question to his disciples about what they value. What shall profit a man if he gained the whole world, yet forfeit his very soul?

And then just last Sunday evening we were looking at that question that Jesus asked Peter after his denial. Simon, son of John, do you love me?

Well, this week we conclude our series and we're going to be looking at that question that Jesus asks twice in the passage before us. He asks it first to James and John as disciples and then he asks it to blind Bartome as the beggar.

What do you want me to do for you? This is a sermon about expectation because the way one answers this question will reveal the expectation they have of Jesus.

[2 : 24] Now our purpose in looking at these questions has really been to do some heart examination, to provoke us, to think, who is Jesus and how shall we live in light of who he is?

And it's been my prayer that these heart penetrating questions would challenge us and spur us to see him and to love him as we see Jesus played out and live in his life out in the drama of the gospels.

Today it's my prayer that we have a fresh vision of who Jesus is. If you're a Christian, then I hope you'll see your life's perhaps you will sadly see your life's reflected in the lives of James and John today and the other disciples.

Maybe you're not yet a believer, well it's our prayer that you would see the glorious wonder of having your eyes opened as Bartome stood in this passage and having your expectations of Jesus changed and challenged.

Now I'd like us to look at this sermon by going on a journey with Jesus and his disciples and the large crowds that were with him that day. All of them were making their way to the festival of Passover, a great Jewish celebration.

[3 : 35] And as we journey with them, I want us to observe the details. I want us to listen to their conversation. I want us to hear how they answered Jesus' question so that we can see what's going on in their minds and see the expectation they place on Jesus.

So we're going to look at this passage in three sections. First we're going to look at this passage by looking at what's going on in Jesus' mind. We'll get an insight into his own expectations of himself.

And then we're going to look and walk with James and John and see their reaction to Jesus' question and understand their expectations. And then finally we'll stand back and we'll watch as Jesus, as Bartome encounters Jesus, we'll see how he answers the question and we'll see his expectation of who Jesus is.

So let's begin and we're going to pick up this story in verse 32 of Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 10 in verse 32. They were on their way up to Jerusalem, it's Mark says.

Incidentally, it says, they were on their way up, they were actually travelling south. But Jerusalem was the city upon a hill and so we have here, they were on their way up to Jerusalem.

[4 : 52] Now in your mind, Ziya, I want you to picture this huge procession of people on the move. I want you to picture them as they continue to grow in number as they pass through towns and villages and people are just swept up in this procession that's going to Jerusalem.

Imagine the streets as they're pulsating with people, perhaps singing Psalm 126 as we were singing earlier, preparing their hearts for worship and for giving offerings to God.

And Jerusalem's also that place where Jesus Christ intends to accomplish his mission. And it says in Mark, they were on their way up to Jerusalem with Jesus leading the way.

Now isn't that fascinating? We could so easily read over that. Our Lord is going up to Jerusalem and He's leading the people with steadfast. With every stride He takes, He does so with a sense of destiny and purpose.

He's marching to the most climactic event in the history of our universe. The cross of Calvary.

[6 : 03] God tells us in His gospel that He had a face, that His face was like a flint set to Jerusalem. In other words, His eyes were fixed.

And isn't it surprising that the thing that occupies our Saviour's mind is the cross? It has been His all-consuming thought since the very beginning.

It has been on His mind since His childhood through His adolescence in His ministry and it is supremely on His mind as He strides towards Jerusalem. And we read in verse 32 that His disciples were astonished while those who followed were afraid.

Again, it's no surprise that the disciples were astonished. Matters are becoming very serious. The atmosphere is tense and they're most likely astonished by the unwavering advance of their leader. There must have been something different about Jesus' demeanour. Perhaps it was the way that He looked. Perhaps it was the manner in which He walked. Whatever it was, there was something that gripped the disciples and left them astonished.

[7 : 13] Mark also knows that those who followed, those in the crowd, they were afraid. And that isn't surprising either. Remember, the popular opinion of Jesus spread by the religious leaders was that Jesus was a radical rogue.

He was a blasphemer. And so the crowd's fear and their alarm is totally understandable. Jesus was a risky man to follow.

And then we get an insight into what's going on in the mind of Christ in verses 33 to 35 as He predicts His death for the third time in Mark's Gospel.

He says, we're going to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priest and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and hand Him over to the Gentiles.

They will mock Him, spit in Him, flog Him and kill Him. Three days later He will rise. Can you imagine the thoughts that were coursing through the mind of Jesus as He said this?

[8 : 21] Jesus knows exactly how He's going to die. Very little detail. Jesus knew that He was going to be betrayed by one of His disciples, Judas.

He was going to be handed over to the religious leaders of the day that He would in a few days be standing before the Sadducees. And they'd be handed over to the Gentiles because the Romans, they were occupying Jerusalem and they were the one who would put Him to death.

He knows the process. He'll be mocked. He'll be spat on. He'll be killed. And three days later He will rise. And why does Jesus know this so well?

Jesus knows this so well because it's been prophesied about in the Old Testament. And Jesus knew that He was a suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

And I don't think we can begin to imagine the weight of His thoughts knowing that He would suffer for our sin, bearing our guilt and bearing our shame even though He is the innocent, holy, sinless Son of God.

[9 : 34] And Jesus had told His disciples three times now in chapter 8, chapter 9 and chapter 10 that He was going to die. And you think that they would live with this expectation, wouldn't you? You think that they would know that Jesus is here because He's come to die, come to save them from their sins.

But the fact that they didn't get it actually makes a contrast between the disciples' expectations and Barthelemy's expectations so startling. The people who you expect to get it don't.

And the person who you don't expect to get it does. So let's move to our second point. Now let's look at the thoughts of James and John as disciples in verses 35 and 45.

At some point in their journey, James and John draw close to Jesus. You shouldn't be surprised at that. James and John are part of Jesus' inner circle. They are part of Jesus' closest friends.

They had been there at key points in Jesus' life like the Transfiguration. There were many times where James, John and Peter were able to be alone with Jesus and pray. In verses 35 they approached Jesus and they say, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

[10 : 47] We want you to do for us whatever we ask. Doesn't that statement reveal what's going on in their minds?

Despite observing Jesus' determination, despite hearing his prediction of his death, the only thing that these disciples can discuss is themselves.

The only thing that they can discuss is themselves. I wondered if you're a Christian, can you identify with these disciples?

What consumes your mind? What is your main concern in life? You can imagine that as James and John were approaching Jerusalem and as they were chatting amongst themselves, they were thinking, we're nearly at the final destination.

We better make sure, we better ensure that we get to share in this honour and glory that we're going to experience. And the reason they thought that is because they thought that Jesus had actually come, not to save them from their sins, but they had come to overthrow the Roman Empire.

[11 : 55] And so with this self-interest burning in their hearts, they say, Jesus, do for us whatever we ask. And in asking this question, what they're really asking for is a blank check from Jesus.

They want a genie, not Jesus. They want infinite wishes granted in an instant. And so Jesus responds to their question in verse 36.

And notice he asks that he responds to their statement by asking this question, the one that we're looking at today, what do you want me to do for you?

Jesus wants to know the exact desire of their heart. And now in asking this question, Jesus allows these men to display their own spiritual shallowness and uncover their expectation of Him.

In verse 37, they replied, let one of us sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory. In other words, what they're saying is, hey, Jesus, glad you asked.

[13 : 00] We'd like to be centre stage with you when you conquer this kingdom. Isn't it remarkable that what is uppermost in the minds of His disciples is their own ambition?

It's not Jesus' impending suffering. It's what they want. But before we're too hard on the disciples, let's remember these disciples were Christians.

These disciples had given up everything to follow Jesus. And there are, even in their statements, evidence of faith. They say, Jesus, you're a king.

You have a kingdom. There is a throne. They have some sort of understanding. But sadly, their perspective of the Messiah is so flawed. But I wonder, I suppose we could ask ourselves as Christians today, what is our view of Jesus?

Do you see a little of yourself in James and John? Do we often live with the wrong view of Jesus that would mean that we live for our own ambitions?

[14 : 07] That we want Jesus to further our ambitions because we think little of Him and much of ourselves. How many of us would admit that we need the eyes of our hearts to be opened afresh, to see Jesus as He is in the pages of Scripture?

And so this question that Jesus asks highlights what's on their mind. And after hearing their mistaken notion, Jesus corrects him in verse 38 and he says, you don't know what you're asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I'm baptized with? Jesus uses these two symbols, the cup and the baptism as symbols of suffering.

In other words, Jesus reminds them that their request for glory is a request for suffering. Are you aware of that?

That the way of the cross is the only way to glory. As to say that we have to live lives where we deny ourselves, where we take up our own cross daily and follow Jesus.

[15 : 19] I notice that the other disciples in verse 41 became becoming indignant at James and John. It's most likely that their indignation wasn't at the shock of the statement that they've just that James and John have made, which you'd expect it to be, but it's rather because they felt their own glory, their own positions were about to be taken by these two other disciples.

You see these other disciples, they wanted preeminence as well. We know that because only in a chapter before in Mark 9, there was a time where they were journeying and the disciples were having an argument amongst themselves.

The argument was this, who is going to be greatest in the kingdom? That indicates that their spiritual attitude was no better.

I think it's so easy for us to condemn others of what we excuse ourselves in. It's so easy for us to condemn others of what we excuse ourselves in.

It's so easy to point the finger and get mad for things that we do ourselves. So then our attitude of the 12 must have caused the Lord some sorrow.

[16 : 31] If anything it showed him that despite all his teaching, they still didn't get it. And so in verse 42, Jesus calls them together and he teaches them a very important lesson.

He teaches them the lesson about what it means to be great in the kingdom. Whoever wants to become great among you, he says, must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

And Jesus wants them to reflect a life of a servant. Jesus had modelled it for them and will continue to modelled for them in his time on earth.

He will modelled it in that night when they have their last supper and he washes their feet. And he even washes Judas the betrayer's feet. And ultimately he modelled it as he says in verse 45, that he came not to be served, but to serve and that he gives his life as a ransom for many.

And so we've seen what's on the Lord's mind, we've seen what's on the disciples' minds. Let's just spend the rest of our time looking at what's in Bartimaeus' mind. Picture the scene. Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho.

[17 : 44] They're about 15 miles now from Jerusalem. As they leave the city, there is a blind beggar sitting at the roadside. This is one of my favourite stories in the Bible.

This blind beggar begins to shout, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Son of David was just a way of addressing Jesus as a messiah.

And the amazing thing is that Bartimaeus knows who Jesus is. There's a stark contrast there. He actually knows that Jesus is a messiah. Promise to come. He's going to be a descendant of David. He gets all the connections. I don't know how we're not told. And he starts asking Jesus for mercy. In other words, he is expressing his weakness, his need for Jesus. In Bartimaeus' words, we see the expectation we should have seen in the disciples.

He is a man with a great need. He's never met Jesus before. He's a beggar. He's never seen a miracle of Christ. He's blind. He's never heard the great sermon in the Mount. Yet he knows enough about Jesus to ask for mercy and to call out on him when he passes by.

[19 : 01] It's a tremendous prayer. And so Bartimaeus tries to get Jesus' attention and he yells and he yells, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

And at this point a whole bunch of people start to get on his case and they say, hey Bart, you're going to shut up? You're going to zip it? Jesus is a rabbi. Just let him go on. You get back to your begging and just be quiet. Remarkably, Bartimaeus isn't deterred by the crowd. You see, he's aware of his great need.

And so he continues to cry out for help. He can't look Jesus in the eye. He can't eat because he can't see. He can't stand up and find Jesus because he can't push him his way through the crowds. He can't like the keys climb a tree to try and make himself known to Jesus. All he can do is yell at the top of his voice, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

You have to love that. That Bartimaeus has a faith that will cause him to yell out, Jesus, have mercy on me. That's why the crowd saying to him, Bart, zip it, put a lid on it, be quiet. He still persists. He yells all the more.

[20 : 25] He yells all the louder. And what happens next? Jesus brings the whole crowd to a halt and they stop. And he says, tell him to come to me.

I wonder, do you think Jesus is bothered when you or I cry out to him? Here's a little thing to keep in mind. Our God never sleeps, nor slumbers.

He doesn't get tired and he delights to hear us cry out to him. If there's one thing that's clear about Jesus' treatment of people in the gospels, it is this, is that he loves it when people cry out to him. He loves it when people put their faith in him. Think of a paralytic man and his four friends, men who display their faith by taking their best friend and then ripping a hole in a roof and lowering down and Jesus heals the paralytic man and says, go, your faith has healed you. Or what about the woman who had the problem of bleeding? And she's in the crowd and she's unclean and she could never touch a rabbi, so culturally unacceptable.

And yet she reaches out her hand and she touches the hem of his garment. And Jesus says, who touched me? And he looks at her and he says, go, your faith has healed you. You see, Jesus loves it when people put their faith in him. He loves it when people get beyond the crowd, get beyond the barriers and put their faith in him. But the only way you're going to put your faith in him is, depends upon the expectation you have of him.

[22 : 11] And blind Baramese the beggar, he had the right expectation. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And so the people who had just been rebuking him, I left to say, Baramese, Bart, we're sorry, get up. He wants to speak to you. You can imagine how they would have felt so repentant. As he said, get up your feet, cheer on, go see him.

And Baramese leaps to his feet, he throws his cloak aside, he runs to Jesus. And what does Jesus say to him? Verse 51, what do you want me to do for you? The same question that he asked James and John, what do you want me to do for you?

And everybody in the crowd was probably waiting with anticipation what Baramese would say. Is it alms that he wants? Is it silver? Is it gold that he's going to ask for? What do you want me to do for you?

Jesus knew what Baramese was going to ask him, but he still asks the question because our Heavenly Father loves to hear his people. See, the heart of what the Christian faith is all about is a personal relationship with God. And so Jesus asks this question so that he can engage in personal fellowship with Baramese.

What do you want me to do for you? In other words, speak to me, tell me. And Baramese responds, rabbi, actually in the original it's stronger than that, it's rabbi on I. The great one I want to see.

[23 : 58] Baramese knows what he wants, he knows what he needs. Suppose the question is, do we? Do we know what we need?

Baramese was lacking in eyesight, but he certainly makes up on insight because he understands who Jesus is. He knows that he's the Son of God, he knows that Jesus is able to save, he knows that Jesus is able to heal, he knows that Jesus is able to restore. And so he says, I want to see. Are we like, are we begging Jesus to sit beside him in glory like James and John? Or are we begging like Baramese to see Jesus to have our eyes opened?

Let me put it another way. Do you want to be in first place in your life or do you want to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Jesus responds in his usual fashion, go, your faith has healed you. And the word healed there is the same word for salvation, go, your faith has saved you. And immediately Baramese received his sight and it says he followed Jesus along the road.

One of the things I love about Baramese is that he couldn't even contemplate letting go of Christ. He couldn't contemplate of doing anything else or going anywhere else because Jesus was now first in his life.

[25 : 36] He'd learned that he had to make Christ preeminent in his heart unlike the disciples who had made themselves. I think as disciples we are often, we often fall into the danger of thinking too little of Jesus and thinking too much of ourselves.

Rather we need to, even this morning, to ask Jesus, Jesus I want to see. I need the eyes of my heart to be open, to see you afresh, to understand you afresh, to live with that expectation that you will work in me and through me and you will do it for your own glory.

Do we live with a small expectation of Jesus? If you're not a Christian this starts with you calling out to Jesus as Baramese did and asking him that same question, Jesus I want to see you the Savior of sinners.

If you are a Christian what is your expectation this morning? Are you consumed with selfish ambition? Is Jesus just a genie for you that you cry out to you when you want him to satisfy your desires?

Or is he the one that you know is worthy of all your worship, of all your adoration and of all your affection? I would order just all, expect much of Jesus.

[27 : 06] Do that each day by beholding him in the pages of scripture, seeing just how amazing he is. Strive to get to know him.

Have your eyes wide open to the glories and the riches that are found only in him. Align your priorities like Baramese with his priorities. Die to self, take up your cross, follow him on that path that leads to glory.

Let me close by asking the question that Jesus asked James and John and Baramese the blind beggar. What do you want me to do for you?

Let's pray. Jesus we thank you that you asked that question.

This morning we would ask you Jesus we want to see, we want to behold you, the Savior of sinners.

[28 : 16] We want a fresh vision of you as your followers. And Jesus if there be anyone today here who doesn't know you and that is their prayer and their heart. Father we want to see them as they follow you and make you preeminent in their lives.

We thank you so much Jesus that you asked this question because again you ask us what is it that we're living for, what is it that we want. We thank you for this great reminder and this great story that you're the one we want to see, you're the one we want to live for, you're the one we want to give our lives to. Jesus we thank you and we praise you.

In your name we pray. Amen.