

## EXPECTATION

Text: Acts 3:1-9

INTRO: Sometime back, the TV reported of a church group looking forward with great anticipation to an up-coming wor-ship assembly. The President of the U.S. was scheduled to be there. I am not among President Clinton's greatest fans, but if he were to be in an assembly to hear me preach, I would be honored. I would be excited. And I would be very nervous.

But I stay a little excited, and I stay a little nervous, because every assembly Someone greater than the President is here. Not physically--but He's here, nonetheless, Matt. 18:20.

Knowing that the Lord is present--that when we sing His praises, He is listening. When we pray to the Father in His name, He hears us, and presents that prayer to the Father just the way we would have liked to have prayed it if we had been able. When we study and preach His word, He waits to bless us abundantly. When we meet in sweet communion and drink the cup of the Lord at His table in His kingdom, He is there, drinking it with us in a new and spiritual way. We should approach every opportunity to gather together in His name with anticipation and expectation.

### I. THE LAME MAN IN OUR TEXT HAD GONE TO THE TEMPLE WITH A DEGREE OF EXPECTATION.

- A. Otherwise he would have stayed home.
- B. He knew, that despite the fact that those who would go to the prayer meeting were not sinless, that they had their own problems, & that some of them would probably do their dead-level-best to ignore him--in spite of that, they were worshipers of God, and they were of all people those who were most likely to have compassion on him and help him.
- C. When Peter & John stopped, when they called upon him to look at them, he **expected** them to give him an alms.
- D. His expectations were slightly misdirected, but he received much more than he had asked for or hoped for.

[Christ is] able to do exceedingly abundantly above all

that we ask or think... (Eph. 3:20).

II. THE 10 MEN MOSES SENT TO SPY OUT THE LAND OF CANAAN & WHO BROUGHT BACK A NEGATIVE REPORT, FAILED LARGELY BECAUSE THEY LOST THEIR SENSE OF EXPECTATION

READ NUMBERS 13:31-33

III. THE CASE OF MOVIE STAR, ENTERTAINER PAT BOONE.

- A. For many years, a faithful & conscientious member of the Lord's church. In his first movie, he even refused to kiss the girl as the script called for.
- B. But after a few years in the entertainment industry, after a few years of compromise & rethinking, he lost interest in the Lord's church & in its worship services.
- C. In his book, A New Song, he told how he came to dread the worship services in which they would continually sing the same old songs, pray the same old prayers, and preach the same old sermons he'd heard time after time.
- D. I dare say that those same worship assemblies which he found so dull & drab, if anyone there was singing with spirit & understanding & praying with spirit & understanding, those same worship services were lifting someone's heart & stimulating someone's soul & nudging someone on to renewed zeal & vigor & love for the Lord & His cause.
- E. Pat found what he expected to find--and those who came with the expectation of being helped & encouraged & enlightened likewise, most of the time, found what they expected to find. A preacher friend of mine who, when someone indicates that they didn't get anything out of the lesson, he suggests that maybe they didn't bring anything to put it in.

IV. WHAT WE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT.

- A. When you come to a worship assembly at this congrega-

tion, you have a right to expect us to lift our voices in songs of praise to God as we teach & admonish one another in psalms, hymns & spiritual songs. Join with us. Lift your voice to God, & let Him lift your soul to new heights of spirituality. Col 3:16 1 Cor 14:15

B. You have a right to expect that godly men will lead us in prayers that are fervent and respectful and Scriptural.

We hope you can offer a hearty "amen" when the prayer is concluded. James 5:16; 1 Cor. 14:16.

C. You have a right to sit in on a Bible class or a sermon in which the teacher or speaker has obviously given thought to the lesson he is presenting. You have a right to expect the teacher to be zealous & excited about the word of God. You should expect to be enlightened, encouraged & sometimes rebuked by the word of God.

D. On the Lord's day, you have a right to expect the worshippers to partake of the Lord's supper in memory of Christ & His sacrifice, as His followers have done each first day of the week for nearly 2,000 years. Acts 20:7.

E. Also, on the Lord's day, the members of the congregation will give financial donations from the abundance with which God has blessed them as recorded in 1 Cor. 16:2.

You will not hear of pie sales & cake sales & car washes & raffle tickets & other forms of money-making activities. We believe in what we are doing, and we support it with our time, our talents, & our pocket books.

F. Now, I realize that the best song leader, the best class teacher, the best preacher, the best prayer leader will not always be at their best. Nevertheless, if we--you and I will sing with spirit & understanding, we will be blest. When righteous men lead fervent, effectual prayers, we will be blessed. When teachers & preachers teach God's word in words easy to understand we will be blessed.

CONCLUSION: Every time you can, assemble with us. Encourage us, and let us encourage you. Expect to be benefited. Expect to be up-lifted. Expect a blessing. Like the man in Acts 3, your expectations may not always be met in exactly the way you anticipated, but if you will enter heartily into the worship of God in spirit & in truth, you will be blessed.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 5, 1995  
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, June 1, 1997  
Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, PA, May 24, 1998  
Benchley, Bryan, TX, June 16, 2000 (meeting)