

The Unexpected Jesus: Disappointment With God

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Core Competency:

Giving Away My Life-“I give away my life to fulfill God’s purposes.”

Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His

Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters, pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His

Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His

Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

Recently, my son came home from track practice and told me that the coach had called for a parent meeting after practice on Friday. Based on this information, at 5:30, on Friday, I arrived at his school. As I approached, the parking lot was conspicuously empty.

Immediately, I began to doubt the accuracy of the information my son had relayed to me. At the front entrance, all the doors were locked. I quickly walked around to the side entrance. Although these doors were locked, a student happened to see me and let me into the building. I walked down the hallway towards the cafeteria, searching for the meeting. The squeak of sneakers grew louder and then softer again as I passed the gym. I still had not seen another parent. As I passed the front office, I got a clear view of the empty cafeteria. From the band hall, I could hear drum roll, as if I might be about to do or say something important. A teacher happened to step out into the hallway. I stopped her to ask for help. While we were talking, another searching parent joined us. Although the teacher did not know anything about a meeting, she walked with us to the gym.

“Hey, do you guys know anything about the parent track meeting?” she called to several passing students. One student stopped, and said, “I think maybe it is supposed to be at 6:30.”

The other parent, the lone adult out of 60+ member team who seemed to know anything about a meeting, quickly left. Frustrated, I headed back to my car, wondering if I had somehow missed an email. It was now 5:43 p.m. Suddenly, the mom of one of my son’s track friends pulled up. Together we returned to the gym where, now, one man sat alone on the bleachers. My friend quickly confirmed that he was also waiting for the meeting. Glancing around, I sat down. Nothing seemed to make sense: the empty parking lot, the locked doors, the contradictory 6:30 meeting time, the conspicuous lack of parents, and the absent coaches. Could I have misunderstood? Nonetheless, several minutes later, with just 3 parents present, the coaches entered the gymnasium and started the parent meeting.

When circumstances are not as you expect, it is natural to question your assumptions. As John announced the coming Savior, I doubt that he envisioned either languishing in prison or a Messiah that, would not rise to earthly kingship. In our passage, John, the herald of the kingdom, the one who Jesus names as the greatest “among those born of women” (Mt 11:11) is struggling. If John can struggle, you can too.

This week, as you study, remember that God loves you. He is utterly faithful to accomplish his redemptive purposes on this earth. In addition, as you entrust yourself to Him, He takes you into His arms, rejoices over you, and works in your heart to conform you to His image.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters, pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Read Matthew 3: 11-17

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the One who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove His sandals. He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire..

12 His winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn. But the chaff He will burn up with fire that never goes out.”

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

14 But John tried to stop Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and yet You come to me?”

15 Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him to be baptized.

16 After Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on Him.

17 And there came a voice from heaven: This is My beloved Son. I take delight in Him!

Read Matthew 11:1-6

1 When Jesus had finished giving orders to His 12 disciples, He moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent a message by his disciples

3 and asked Him, “Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

4 Jesus replied to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:

5 the blind see, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news.

6 And if anyone is not offended because of Me, he is blessed.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. According to Matthew 3:3, Luke 1:13-17 & 1:76-80, what can you gather about both the purpose and the importance of John’s life?
2. When Jesus appeared on the scene, how did John respond?
3. Why did Jesus elect to get baptized? What did His baptism accomplish?
4. Fast forward to chapter 11 where we find John in prison. Read Mark 6:17-20.
 - a) Describe the circumstances of John’s imprisonment.

- b) What seems unfair or unjust about John's imprisonment?

- c) Do you think God is concerned with fairness or justice in the lives of his people? Explain your answer.

5. Why do you think that John said, "Are you the one that I to come, or should we expect someone else?"

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

- 6. a) How might your expectations (for how God should answer your prayers, about God's timing, about circumstances) become a stumbling block to you?
 - b) How do your expectations fit together with (the core competency) Romans 12:1 (Giving away my life)?

- 7. As John experienced doubt, what did he do with his questions? (It may also be instructive to also think about what he did not do).

- 8. a) At first glance, Jesus' answer to John may seem strange. How was Jesus' answer effective in addressing John's question? (Is 35:5-6; 61:1-2)
 - b) What can or should a believer do when he or she has doubts or questions?

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.