



**Title: High Expectations**

**Theme: Grasping the Promises of God in the Lord's Work**

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

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### **Special promises found in the Word of God**

*Often after men and women of God have taken time to fast, pray and surrender their hearts over to the cleansing work of God they will be lead of the Holy Spirit to special promises found in the Word of God. As the Holy Spirit brings revelation of these promises, illumination of these truths will keep obedient Christians steadfast, faithful, and joyful in their work with Jesus Christ.*

*I would propose to you that there are promises of God found in His Word that bring “High Expectations” in service to the King of kings and Lord of Lords. Christians can expect success in their labors with the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “...stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” Galatians 6:9 says, “...at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”*

*Just what can the obedient children of God expect in their labors with the Lord and in their walk with Christ? There are four truths that the Holy Spirit of God wants you to grasp as you labor diligently in the work of the Lord.*

### **He rewards those who earnestly seek Him**

*The first truth worth grasping in this message today is that the obedient, faithful Christian can expect to be rewarded as he diligently seeks the Lord in faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”*

Let the Holy Spirit of Christ put these truths deep within your heart. “He rewards those who seek Him.” Those who enjoy God's promises in service to Him are those who have genuine faith. Faith (*pistis*), means to be loyal and steadfast in devotion and allegiance to the Lord. (Practical Word Studies of the New Testament)

The practical application is that this child of God denies and sacrifices himself because he trusts in God. He knows that the Lord will work out all things towards God's good purposes. Therefore, he cast himself totally upon God's grace and lives a life of faithfulness to the Lord Jesus.

The Christian who enjoys God's rewards is the one who does not doubt what God's Word says about his salvation, provision, or strengthening in time of need. The child of God who enjoys God's rewards is the one who overcomes that temptation to back off his calling and give up. He does not give in to the lust of the flesh, he is not lured away by the world's temptations nor continue to listen to Satan's lies. He never slackens or surrenders, his faith keeps him keeping on. (Practical Word Studies of the New Testament)

The Christian who enjoys God's reward is the child of God who has Holy Spirit illumination of the Triune God and he fully trusts that God's promises will be fulfilled. (The New Bible Commentary) He believes what God has revealed about Himself in the written Word, the Bible. His life expresses peace, and a desire to be obedient.

He knows that sin keeps Him out of fellowship with Lord and he trusts only in the shed blood of Christ for the restoration of that fellowship. He pays strict attention to God's oracles, attends to God's ordinances, faithfully depends upon the Holy Spirit's enabling to complete what he has been called to do, and makes effort to be actively involved in the lives of God's people. (Matthew Henry Commentary)

Reward getters are those who are worshippers of Christ. They are surrendered to the Holy Spirit and understand that their real reward is what God told Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." (Genesis 15:1) They know that Jesus is the greatest reward that anyone can receive.

Because Christ is their reward Christians will get ready for service like an athlete trains for competition. Good athletes make time for conditioning. They eat right, build muscle, and protect themselves for that which could cause permanent damage, thus, eliminating themselves from the competition. Christian athletes feed upon God's Word, pray and apply God's Word into their lives. They protect their eyes and ears from that which may cause permanent spiritual damage. They protect their relationship with Christ and do not take it for granted. They have a conviction about God's moral character and laws, and they know that He not only exists but He really cares about them and about everything that is happening on this earth. (The Expositors Bible Commentary)

The Bible tells about King Asa, who reformed Judah and reigned in Jerusalem from 911-870 B.C. (Who's Who in the Bible) He was a great grandson of Solomon and the Bible says, Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD." (1 Kings 15:11) In Biblical history we read that the "...Spirit of God came upon Azariah... He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.'" (2 Chronicles 15:1-2)

This passage of scripture holds a great promise to the child of God who expresses true faith by a surrendered heart to God's will. At the same time holds a curse to all who reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The warning is for those who refuse to gain His counsel through the written Word, who waste their Holy Spirit gifts and talents upon themselves and do not exercise them for the glory of God. There are blessings for the child of God who sacrificially exercises his Spiritual gifts for the good of the Body of Christ and for the well-fair of the lost. They will know God's greatest reward, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and will enjoy a Holy Spirit led and empowered life on this earth.

In the time when the prophet Azariah's words came to King Asa there was great distress, Israel was without the one true God, without priests to teach God's decrees, without precepts and laws. The inhabitants were in great turmoil and it was not safe to travel about. One nation was being crushed by another and the Bible says "...God was troubling them with every kind of distress..." (2 Chronicles 15:3-6)

In Deuteronomy 28:1-14 we read of the blessings of God for a nation for obedience. America and the church have most certainly enjoyed those blessings. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 speaks of the curses for a nation that disobeys the Word of God. America and many in the church are experiencing His chastising right now.

The church of Jesus Christ in our day is called to reform a nation that has strayed from her God-fearing roots. America needs a true spiritual awakening and the church needs a true restoration back to the written Word of God. The prophet had good news for Asa in the work of reformation. His words are for the obedient church today as she battles for the souls of mankind, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." (2 Chronicles 15:7)

The child of God who lives out his faith in Christ may seek the Lord for wisdom, strength and provision. He will have the greatest reward, Jesus Christ. He will be involved in the "Great Commission." He will know what Moses knew and experienced, the promises of God fulfilled. When God sent Moses to free the Israelites from the bondage of slavery He gave Moses this promise, "I will be with you..." (Exodus 3:12)

The lost are in bondage to sin. The flesh, the world and the devil holds mankind captive and they need to hear about the great deliver, Jesus Christ, the only one who can set the captive free. Christ gave a commission to the eleven. The promise and command He gave to them goes on to their successors, the ministers of the gospel. These truths are applicable to all His followers as well. The Lord Jesus gave pastors and teachers as well as apostles for the purpose of equipping the Body of Christ for works of service. (Ephesians 4:11-13) Otherwise the "Great Commission" could not carry on. (Matthew Henry Commentary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; The Bible Exposition Commentary; The Teacher's Commentary; Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary)

Matthew 28 gives Christians the same promise that was given to Moses as they go forth under the authority of Christ to preach the gospel. Jesus Christ says, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) As God sent Moses, He sent His apostles and this promise goes on to His obedient servants as they teach others how to become disciples of Christ.

Obedient Christians in making disciples of Christ will have His comfort (John 16:7) and have His present help (Psalm 46:1). He will carry them through difficulties, plead their case before God, be in all their services, strengthen them in all their suffering. He will make their ministries effectual in due time. He will break down the strongholds of Satan.

The King James Bible says that Christ will be with us until "the end of the world." As long as this dispensation continues the Lord will be with His church empowering those who are now faithfully working with the Lord. He will continue to rise up followers that will answer to the call to make disciples after we are gone. The Lord's work will continue on and on and on until this world as we know it has passed away and the Lord makes all things new.

Even when the faithful are mistreated or cast away by persecution, Christians will steadfastly keep on. They have the heart of John Calvin who was banished from ungrateful Geneva. He wrote, "Most assuredly if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor [reward]; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise."

Satan has many ways to make the servants of God think that their labors are in vain. Hebrews 11:6 says otherwise and it is a truth to be grasped. God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Count the souls that have been saved, the ministries that continue on, the many times the Lord has provided for your needs, simple answers to prayers and the fellowship that is among the believers.

**Expect to see Evidence of God's Hand Working**

*Because He is faithful, Christians can expect that He rewards those who diligently live a life of faith and seek His will for their lives. The obedient can expect to see evidence of God's Hand working among them. Mark 10:27 says, "Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.'"*

This passage of scripture is found in the teaching of Jesus in His dealing with a young man whom Luke said was a ruler (Luke 18:18). It is a key text to bringing understanding that the salvation of a man's soul is the work of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. In Mark 10:17-27 we read of a rich young man who came to Jesus and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life." (Mark 10:17) He had good morals and wealth. He kept the Ten Commandments by not committing murder, adultery, stealing, giving false testimony, nor defrauding people. He honored his father and mother. Jesus told the man he lacked one thing. He needed to sell all he had and give it to the poor and he would then have treasures in heaven. (Mark 10:21) Jesus also said, "...then come, follow Me." (Mark 10:21) At these words of Christ, the "young man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth." (Mark 10:22)

Wealth at that time was considered by many Jews to be a sign of God's favor upon a man. (Daily Bible Studies; The New American Commentary) What Jesus said about the negative expression of this rich ruler most certainly astonished the disciples. Our Lord said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23) This caused them to ask, "Who then can be saved?" (Mark 10:26)

In the discourse with the young rich man Jesus is not teaching that wealth is evil and He did not teach that poverty is better than riches. He did not teach that only the poor can be saved.

He did teach that discipleship is very costly and having wealth and depending upon one's good morals can be a hindrance to repentance and acceptance of Him being Savior and Lord.

Most people live in a false security. They have several good churches in their community and have more than they need. Compared to the poor who live in third world countries, most Americans are wealthy. There is a powerful form of Godliness that denies the power of God in our country.

The true gospel is probably rejected by most in America because they feel that they are Christians simply by their belief in Jesus. They are impossible to reach because they feel they are good enough to go to heaven.

Jesus has great news, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Remember this text is found in the context of sinners needing to be saved and people considering what needs to be done in order to inherit eternal life.

Just as Christ brought the attention of the young rich man to what it takes to inherit eternal life we can expect God, by His Holy Spirit to do a work in our families, among our friends, co-workers and community. Jesus came to seek and save the lost in this world (Luke 19:10) and He has commissioned Christians to go and make disciples under His authority. (Matthew 28:18-19)

Jesus promises power from the Holy Spirit to all Christians who will answer the call to make disciples. Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) While living lives surrendered to and empowered by the Holy Spirit of Christ, Christians can expect Him do His work in and through them. Jesus says the Holy Spirit's work is to, "...convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned." (John 16:8-10)

The Lord will work in Christians and through them by the Holy Spirit. He will give all who come in contact with His children the opportunity to choose this day the God of whom they will serve.

### **Expect His peace while doing His work**

*Christians can expect to see God's hand working in their lives and through them as they become involved in the battle for the souls of men and they can expect His peace while doing His work.* John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

The peace that Jesus spoke of here is not exemption from conflict and trial. The peace He spoke of is the calmness that comes in confidence of God. (The Expositors Bible Commentary) Jesus knew this peace and He promises to give it to those who would but trust in Him. Christians can expect the Lord through the Holy Spirit to give them His peace, thus enabling them to move forward in their calling unhesitatingly. They can live in the confidence of knowing that they are in God's protective hand. Nothing will happen to them outside of God's will.

Christians are going to face trials and even persecutions. Thus the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul instructs Christians on how to get God's peace. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Christians who express a life of faith rest in the power of prayer. They know God's peace. His peace is an armed guard around their spiritual heart and puts restless thoughts to rest. His peace is too subtle for intellectual analysis yet steadies the heart. His peace cannot be fully explained but can be experienced. Christians may not fully understand how God puts His peace within them but many have yielded to the call to prayer and enjoy it.

The best way of getting victory over sleepless nights is to see every waking moment as an opportunity to pray. Many have found themselves rested even if they have received only a few hours of sleep because God's peace came upon them as they prayed.

### **Expect the Holy Spirit's presence daily**

*When Christians pray they can expect God's peace. Jesus promises His peace to the children of God. Christians can also expect the Holy Spirit's presence daily.* 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own..."

The Holy Spirit prompts every Christian today to remember that they were purchased at a great price. God sent His one and only Son to be mocked by man and die upon the Cross of Calvary so they can have a relationship with God. "You are not your own," you belong to God. "Therefore, honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:20)

The Apostle Paul writes, "...he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:17) The Holy Spirit will communion with the human spirit of Christians and He will lead them daily. (Romans 8:14) The obedient Christian can expect the Holy Spirit to move them to prayerfully read God's Word and have communion with God in prayer in Jesus' Name.

Are you enjoying and responding to His urgings to read the Bible and pray?

The Holy Spirit will guide you through your day and remind you that everyone is watching the way you live and respond to life's difficulties and God's blessings. You can ask God to make you sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Obedience to His guiding will enable you to live a joyful and victorious life.

If you allow Him, He will guide you throughout your entire day. You can know what King David came to know, "guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." (Psalm 25:5)

Walter Baxendale wrote about a man who put his hope in God all day long and was very sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. "Admiral Sir Thomas Williams, a straight-forward and excellent man, was in command of a ship crossing the Atlantic. His course brought him in sight of the island of Ascension. At that time it was uninhabited and never visited except for the purpose of collecting turtles.

The island was barely visible on the horizon, but as Sir Thomas looked at it he was seized by the Holy Spirit of God to steer towards it. The Holy Spirit's urging became more and more urgent and distressing. Foreseeing that He would not go away, he told his lieutenant to steer the ship in the direction of the island. The officer respectfully pointed out that changing course would greatly delay them. This only increased the Admiral's desire to obey the promptings in his heart.

All eyes were fixed upon the island and soon something was [seen] on the shore. It was white—it was a flag—it was a signal! When they neared the shore they discovered sixteen men, wrecked on the coast many days before, and suffering hunger. They had set up a signal, although they really did not expect anyone to come and give assistance.

The Holy Spirit had moved upon a man who trusted in God all day long and men who were without real hope were rescued."

All of us have family members, friends and co-workers who are stranded on three islands. The flesh, the world and the devil holds many captive and they are without hope. Being led by the Holy Spirit whom lives in you continually can steer you into their lives at just that right moment so they may hear the words of the gospel, which can save their souls.

*In closing, let the Holy Spirit of God place these four truths within your heart. Live in expectation that God wants to and will enable His obedient children to;*  
**One:** Enjoy His rewards for diligently seeking Him in true faith. **Two:** See Him work in reaching out to family members, friends and co-workers. **Three:** Enjoy His peace. **Four:** Experience daily the presence of God's Holy Spirit in their life.

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