

Low Expectations

Why might it be more comfortable to have low expectations in life?

When might we choose low expectations?

Why is it risky to have high expectations?

What is a downside for having low expectations?

How might we be living with low expectations for God and His work in the world?

“Jesus, open our hearts to see and know your glory.”

1



How great
is our God?
Luke 9:37-43

bib.ly/Lu9.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

2

Tightly connected stories in Luke: glory and suffering

“Once when Jesus was praying...”

Luke 9:19

- Jesus is God’s Messiah. He will suffer, die, and be raised again to life
- Jesus’ disciples must also deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, and follow Jesus

“About eight days after Jesus said this...”

Luke 9:28

- Peter, John, and James saw Jesus’ visible glory
- God the Father said: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him.”

“The next day...”

Luke 9:37

- This miracle story

“While they were marveling...”

Luke 9:43

- Jesus will be betrayed and suffer at the hands of people

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Luke 9:37-43

The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. A man in the crowd called out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.”

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“You unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.”

Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

perverse = twisted, distorted

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Notes about Luke 9:37–43

- This man was facing a **personal disaster**
 - He had compassion on his own son
 - Seizures brought shame upon the whole family
 - This would be the end of his bloodline
- The disciples had just been able to cast out demons
 - Here they tried and failed
 - Jesus tells us why: they were “**unbelieving and perverse**”
- Jesus rebuked the disciples & the people before rebuking the demon!
 - Jesus was exasperated with the disciples and people
- Jesus easily did what the disciples could not do
 - “**But Jesus...**” → a great response to all of life’s troubles
 - Demon gave one last effort to defy Jesus → will we still trust?
- Disciples & people: amazed/astonished at Jesus’ power

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perverse = twisted, distorted

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The Big Idea

**God has astounding power
that He loves to use today
in divine wisdom
and in response to our faith-filled prayer
through the grace of Christ**

grace = forgiveness, love, and compassion

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Or do we just live with an empty bag?



When we **pack our bags** for our days, what do we fill our bags with?

What will bring about the good we want?

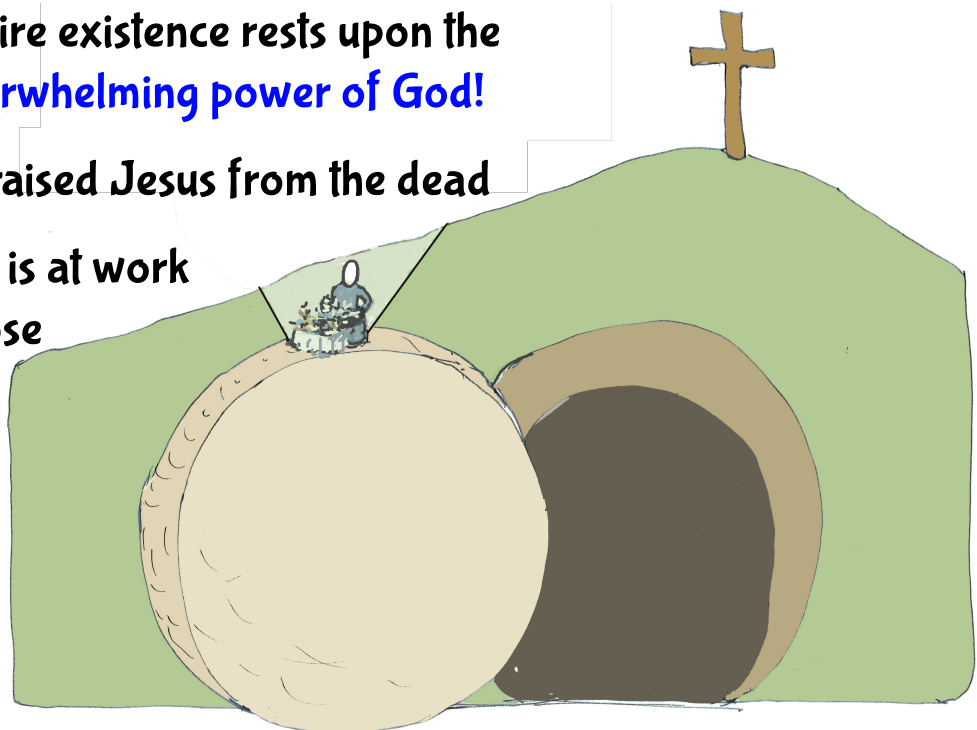
- Friends & family
- Our strength
- Our hard work
- Our successes
- Our resources
- Our wisdom
- And God...

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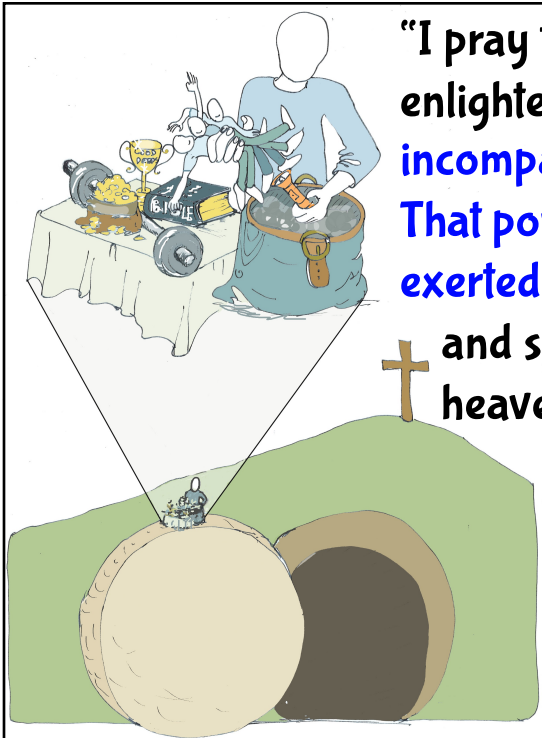
In reality, our entire existence rests upon the **amazing and overwhelming power of God!**

...the power that raised Jesus from the dead

That same power is at work every day for those who believe in the name of our Risen Savior Jesus Christ!



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“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... **his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.”

Ephesians 1:18–21

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An unbelieving and perverse generation

- **Unbelieving:** literally “not believing”
 - Without faith: not believing or trusting God
- **Perverse:**
 - to distort, turn away from, divert to a different place
 - morality: perverse, corrupt
 - worldview and beliefs: replace good ideas with bad ideas

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Our **twisted thinking** about God’s work in the world today

- We don’t really need God’s help
- We can do what is needed if we just try harder or work smarter or use better technology or technique
- God can’t or won’t do what we need
- God might help others, but He can’t or won’t help me
- God doesn’t do miracles in the modern world
- Maybe I can get God to help me in my unloving ways
- If God will help me, then I’ll plan to follow His ways later
- I know better than God what He should do!

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Straight (untwisted) thinking

- God alone has the power to do what I really need
- When God's purposes and our purposes are aligned,
He delights to answer our prayers
- My purposes are aligned with God's when my purposes
are to love Him and to love people and build His Kingdom
- God is a generous God who is active God in our world today
- God loves to give good gifts to His children who ask Him
- When God doesn't give what I ask,
He has planned something even better

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

Sometimes we don't even ask God for what matters so much to us

- "You do not have because you do not ask God." *James 4:2*
- We so often don't turn to God when...
 - our lives are relatively safe
 - our needs are generally met
 - we believe in the power of technology
 - we think things are supposed to work for our good
- Others know the troubles are too big, they ask God, and He is doing miracles!
 - Consider the underground church in Iran, where Jesus is doing great miracles and the church is growing dramatically!

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

Sometimes we don't even ask for what matters so much to us

Sometimes we ask but we don't really believe He can or will act

- "At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, **who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.'**" *Zephaniah 1:12*
- "[The person who asks without believing] should not expect to receive anything from the Lord." *James 1:7*
 - Believe that God can do miracles
 - Believe that God is generous and wants to show His glory to us
 - Believe that God is actively working in our world today

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

Sometimes we don't even ask for what matters so much to us

Sometimes we ask but we don't really believe He can or will act

Sometimes we think God is a stingy (ungenerous) father

- "If you then, though you are evil, **know how to give good gifts to your children**, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" *Luke 11:13*

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

Sometimes we don't even ask for what matters so much to us

Sometimes we ask but we don't really believe He can or will act

Sometimes we think God is a stingy father

Sometimes our purposes are not to love God or people

- "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."
James 4:3

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Sometimes we don't even ask for what matters so much to us

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Sometimes we think God is a stingy father

Sometimes our purposes are not to love God or people

Sometimes we are not forgiving others

- "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, **forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins**" *Mark 11:25*

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Sometimes we think God is a stingy father

Sometimes our purposes are not to love God or people

Sometimes we are not forgiving others

Sometimes we are not willing to submit to God

- "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; **yet not my will, but yours be done.**" *Luke 22:42*

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

Sometimes we don't even ask for what matters so much to us
 Sometimes we ask but we don't really believe He can or will act
 Sometimes we think God is a stingy father
 Sometimes our purposes are not to love God or people
 Sometimes we are not forgiving others
 Sometimes we are not willing to submit to God

Sometimes we give up when we should keep praying

- "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should **always pray and not give up.**" *Luke 18:1*

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Defeaters of God's power in our lives...

**When God doesn't do the miracles we long to see,
 may it not be because...**

— *We failed to ask with faith, expecting His work for His glory
 while submitting to His wisdom*

**Jesus has power to heal, He gives generously,
 and He is eager to answer prayers of faith**

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Application

Be astounded by the power of God

- “**By the word of the Lord** the heavens were made,
their starry host **by the breath of his mouth.**” *Psalms 33:6*
- “His greatness **no one can fathom.**” *Psalms 145:3*
- “Jesus said, ‘With man [salvation of the rich] is impossible,
but with God **all things are possible.**’” *Matthew 19:26*
- God can make a way where there is no way
- He can raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, open the hearts
of those who reject Him, bring the blessing of the Lord
- Know that God is eager to show His glory by answering prayer

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Application

Ask God, with faith and boldness, for His glory and for our joy

- “Teacher, **I beg you to look at my son**, for he is my only child.”
- “Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, **‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’** and it will be done.’” *Matthew 21:21*
- Believe that God **can** do all things, and that God **delights** to give good gifts in response to prayer

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Application

Submit to His decisions with faith and expectation

- When Paul’s faith-filled prayer was not answered, “he said to me, **‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**” *2 Corinthians 12:9–10*
- When His plans are different from ours, trust our powerful and loving Father in heaven with hope and joy

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Application

Submit to His decisions with faith and expectation

- Know that when we come to God, He may show us...
 - our need for repentance
 - a path for our obedience
- This is the kindness of God in answer to our prayer
- This is the path to blessing from God

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“Now to him who is able to do
 immeasurably more
 than all we ask or imagine,
 according to his power **that is at work within us,**
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
 throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:20-21

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“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,
 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.” *Philippians 4:6-7*

Where do you want to see God work?

“Jesus, I beg you to look at _____ and be merciful”

→ When my soul repeats my troubles, we say: “But Jesus...”

→ When people repeat our troubles, we say: “But Jesus...”

Pray now (and don't stop)

Pray with others (for you and for them)

Pray with elders (“Elders” and not just “Elders”)

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“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... **his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead**”

Where do you want to see God work?

- I invite you: stand, or kneel, or raise your hand, and bow your heart
- Pray to Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, God's chosen one, who has total authority over the natural and supernatural world
- “Jesus, I beg you to look at _____ and be merciful”
- Listen to the Spirit:
 - Call to confession and repentance?
 - Call to obedience? Call to endure with hope?
 - Call to continue to pray with expectation?
- Watch for God's work, and give Him private and public praise!

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