

How great is our God?

Luke 9:37-43

Low Expectations

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

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?

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

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

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

What will bring about the good we want?

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!

Ephesians 1:18-21

An unbelieving and perverse generation

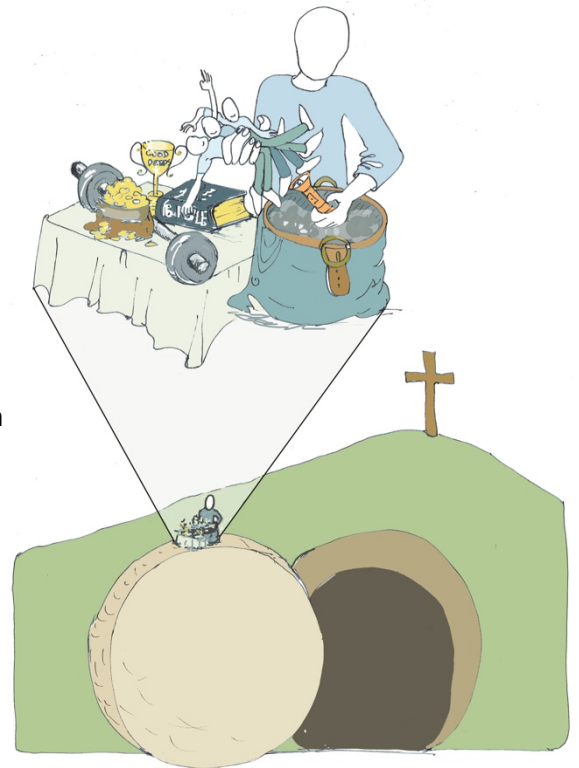
Unbelieving: literally “not believing”

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

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!

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

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!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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." Psalm 33:6

"His greatness no one can fathom." Psalm 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

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

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

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

Conclusion

Ephesians 3:20-21; 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”)

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways are you tempted to have low expectations for God’s work in the world, especially in answer to your prayers? Why might that be?
2. In what ways might you be like the “unbelieving and perverse” disciples?
3. What work of God do you long to see? What is helping you pray? Who is joining you in this prayer? Whose prayer are you joining with?