**RAISING OUR EXPECTATIONS (“GREAT EXPECTATIONS”) - M. Wade – OR - 05/09/2021**

Mother's Day:

* We are blessed with many awesome mothers here.
* We are missing two of those special ones and we need to keep them and their families in our prayers.

* We even have ladies here who serve as spiritual mothers that do not have physical children of their own.

* We are also blessed with a building full of wonderful young ladies.
* You young ladies, take advantage of our beautiful older ladies here in our Christian family.
* Talk to them and learn from them so you can take advantage of their wisdom and example.
* They have immediately responded to family emergencies, deaths, sickness, birth of babies, and caring for others for extended periods of time.
* I have witnessed many moms over the years and even recently, go to extraordinary lengths to provide for and care for children, parents, spouses, or loved ones; many times suffering a great deal in doing so.

*When Daniel was born in New York, Beth’s mom, dad, and sister jumped in their van and drove 15 hours straight from Shelbyville, TN.*

* *Beth’s Mom spent a week helping her adapt to having her first baby.*
* *I am certain Beth will follow her Mom’s example.*
* *We all know of these who exceed the expectations of many in the world!*

**RAISING OUR EXPECTATIONS OF OURSELVES**

*Story of Suzi protecting her family from the neighbors very aggressive German Shepherd. Little Suzi exceeded expectations of how she would protect her family. She was only focused on protecting her Beth and baby Samantha from danger. Maybe that teaches us something when we see someone in sin or in need of salvation. If we focus on the need to save their souls we may be more willing to go beyond what most would expect and meet the great expectations the Lord has for us!*

***Larry started a spark in my mind for this sermon in his last sermon.***

**Paul and Silas Suffered:** Let us read **Acts 16:16-24.**

* Paul has the power to cast out an evil spirit and does, being greatly annoyed.
* Yet when faced with being beaten and put in prison, he does not use that same power to avoid suffering to spread the gospel!
* Either the Holy Spirit directed him to not use the power or he already knew not to use the power.
* The expectation from the Lord and Holy Spirit was to be willing to suffer, even being beaten with rods and put in prison, in order to spread the gospel. Very annoying to be beaten with rods.
* In this case that suffering resulted in the salvation of many (**Acts 16:25-34 and much of the rest of Acts**).
* The Lord’s expectation of Paul and Silas was very high!

**The Lord Suffered: Matthew 16:21** – The expectation was that Jesus would live perfectly, die perfectly, and become the Savior of the world (**John 8:29**)!

**The Apostles Suffered: John 16:1-4 (Actually Saul did this to them), Acts 5:17-32, 41-42, 1 Timothy 4:10**

* The apostles were in prison facing persecution and possible death for preaching the gospel.
* Then they were instructed by the Holy Spirit to go out again and preach, possibly risking their lives again!
* Filling Jerusalem with the gospel and not holding back the truth!

*Granbury, TX: At the end of April and early May, for 20 years now a group of people have been reading in public the entire Bible through in fourteen days, and all the locals talk about it. They are actually reading the Bible aloud, in public and on government property, and different people sign up to read at different times. The emphasis on Scripture and God is reflected in the town. May 6, 2021, Mark Dunagan*

**We All Are Expected to Suffer: Romans 8:16-18, 1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Conclusions**

* I read what these scriptures say and can be inspired from the encouragement and example they give. But then I find myself, at times, hesitating to share the gospel with co-workers, neighbors, friends, or family because I am too focused on risking friendships or relationships rather than focusing on the needs of their souls.
* I need to raise the expectations of myself to the level the Lord wants! I need to exceed the expectations of the world around me (**Matthew 5:20**).
* I need to be willing to sacrifice relationships in order to truly love my neighbor as myself (**Matthew 7:12**).

***How about you this morning? What is God’s expectation of you?*** I think He has great expectations for each one in this building this morning. And maybe some Christians here are like me. You need to exceed the expectations you have for yourself and bring them up to God’s standard.

If you are not yet a child of God, I can tell you He has great expectations for you if you chose to follow Him! Those expectations far exceed the expectations of those in the world! It starts by you repenting of your sins and being baptized. By humbling yourself, the Lord will wash away your sins, raise you up in this life, and raise you up forever in heaven! There is no higher expectation that one can have!