

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

April 26, 2026. ***“What do you want? questions that question us”.*** ***“Who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?”***

I Intro.

We're flying through Spring, finishing up our series on questions. We're glad you've chosen to use this resource. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.

We began this series on Good Friday asking the questions: ***“What do you want?”*** ***“Why are you here?”*** To get us to examine our motives and intentions when we come to church. It began with that first question. When you come to church. When you seek God: ***“What do you want?”*** On Easter we asked: ***“Who are you looking for?”*** When you're looking for something, someone bigger than yourself. ***What are you needing, hoping, to find?*** The second week we asked the question that challenges our tendency to just settle for the life we find ourselves in. ***“Do you want to get well?”*** Last week we followed up with the natural question that comes after a recognition that we want God to help us. ***“What do you want me to do for you?”*** Today, the final question that actually runs us back through all of these previous questions. And we'll hit it in the scripture. It definitely needs context.

III Sunday.

Expectations are the primary killer of relationships, of any kind. Full stop. ***Have you ever expected something from another person, and those expectations put them in a tough spot because that person didn't meet those expectations you had placed on them? Has someone else ever put their expectations on you?*** The first thing I do when I talk to someone who is struggling either in a relationship or just with life, is try to figure out what they were hoping would happen. Disappointment, frustration, anger, misunderstanding nearly always comes out of misplaced expectations. The problem with expectations is we rarely state what we want from others. Those things are often just assumed as normal and natural. We don't enter into friendships, relationships with this 'out in the open' list of what we're hoping to gain or find in that relationship. Even worse, *we rarely know what our own expectations are of others and towards life.* We grew up a certain way. And that way of life was normalized as how everyone is, lives. Expectations will crush whoever we place them on, and will always lead us to disappointment. So, we go through our life as this preformed

puzzle piece of familiarity and comfort, our expectations, looking for someone, some place, something to fit with. And then get disappointed, or mad at others who can't be like we're used to. *"Why can't you think, act, do, be, this way?" "This is just how things are!"*

However, expectations are both important and necessary as a kind of guardrails of what we want our life to look like. Expectations can help us make plans, set goals, measure how we're doing. But unexamined expectations can distort everything, crush others, and set us up for disappointment—especially our relationship with God.

So, addressing our expectations is hard work. The question Jesus asks in this message is really meant as a rhetorical question. It wasn't a question that had a real answer. BUT— as ALL good questions do, it makes us pause in our tracks. Makes us dig deeper to see what our underlying beliefs, motivations, and what our expectations are in our relationship with Jesus. That's what Jesus confronts this man about in our story. **What have we normalized in our understanding of Jesus, who Jesus is, and what his role is in our lives, that needs to be reexamined?**

This scripture is the perfect example of; 'an exercise in missing the point'. Our tendency to not examine, and question, our expectations.

Luke 12:13-15. Then someone called from the crowd, "Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father's estate with me."

Jesus replied, "Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?" Then he said, "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."

What Jesus did was called a 'redirect'. As you can see, the question by Jesus wasn't calling for a specific answer. **What was the guy going to say to Jesus' question?** Jesus cut to the quick about what was motivating this man. His expectations. *"You asked me to do this thing that clearly shows you don't understand what my work is about."* And so Jesus's question (albeit unanswerable) still reveals the inner life of this man. Jesus gives this man a warning about greed. Then Jesus told the parable of the Rich Fool. He had so much he was going to tear down the smaller barns and build bigger ones. Then utters; *"Eat, drink and be merry"*. And Jesus says; *"Tonight your life will be demanded from you."* Then Jesus goes into the: *"Do not worry about your life"* message. Jesus' question went to the root of this man's request. His expectations. This question was to call out the real issue, intent, hidden within the man's request. The purpose of Jesus' question was to force this man to honestly deal with where his request came from. Again, it's what a great question does.

Which is our first engagement with this question.

When we go to Jesus, in prayer, asking for something, are we aware of where that question is coming from? And— are we aware of our expectations of Jesus in that situation?

This is a kick in the gut question that asks a deeper, more probing question.

Who do we expect Jesus to be in our lives?

And are our expectations reasonable and even moreso— scriptural?

A good question stops whatever train of thought we're riding, to see if we're on the right track.

What does this final question from Jesus do? Each one of these aspects of this question from Jesus takes us back through our previous questions. *"What do you want?" "Who are you looking for?" "Would you like to get well?" "What do you want me to do for you?"*

Think about these questions as we walk through each point.

1. We often want Jesus to fix our circumstances, not transform our heart. This is primarily one of the most common struggles and unrealistic expectations we have of Jesus. Jesus came to give us life, salvation, healing, wholeness. But most of our prayers and expectations are for ease and comfort. In spite of Paul always describing Jesus in legal terms (he was an expert in the law) Jesus ALWAYS described himself as The Great Physician. And the role of Jesus in bringing life and healing, is to show us how to be transformed, not manipulate our surroundings.

Do you expect Jesus to fix your life or renovate your heart?

So, what did Jesus talk about in response to this man's request?

The man wanted Jesus to fix his situation, but The Great Physician diagnosed his problem as greed.

2. We tend to project our agenda on Jesus, so he'll take our side. Obviously this man, deep down believed he deserved this request. And honestly, he may have. He may have been treated unfairly. But the problem is he thinks (his expectation) is that Jesus is going to take his side. *"Jesus, I'm in this situation, and when I explain it to you, you'll see I'm right."* He made a request of Jesus, based on an assumption this was the purpose of Jesus. We see this in our current political situation. Jesus is on MY side. We often drift to believing Jesus came to settle our petty, personal issues. Jesus be my lawyer, agent, personal assistant, my fix it man. Jesus take care of the irritations in my life, clear my path, made my life easy and effortless. Jesus' response to this man. I'm not to be used as a weapon, tool, to get what you want. Be constantly awake to when we expect Jesus to show we're right.

3. Jesus addresses the real issues at the heart of our expectations. This is the bottom line truth in this final question. This is *"the thing behind the thing"*. There was something else going on in this man's question. And Jesus called that out.

What makes you think, believe, assume (know what that means) my purpose, the reason I came, my ministry was to negotiate the personal details of your life?

This is a control issue. Expecting Jesus to do our bidding, carry out our wishes, so we can stay in control of our lives. This man had an understanding of who Jesus was, the power of his words, the authority in which he spoke. And he 'expected' Jesus would use that power, authority, influence, to meet his expectations. Jesus made him come face to face with his expectations. This man thought his brother was his primary problem. It just needed to be fixed. Jesus was saying; *"Let me show you what your real problem is...greed"*. We know what this truth is calling us to do. To examine our expectations of God, our faith, and how we live. And let Jesus' question guide us past our surface belief of what our need is, and to the deeper real root of our request. Greed, bitterness, revenge, jealousy, judgmentalness, etc. **Do you know what expectations are driving your requests?**

We're ending on this question because I believe it can help us clarify our expectations of who we believe Jesus is. What he was supposed to be about. To move us to a more scriptural understanding of and relationship with Jesus.

IV Challenge.

Understand that expectations are normal. Let me offer you some grace and a safe place to examine your possible expectations of who Jesus is SUPPOSED to be in your life. I understand the weight and crushing feeling of not having expectations met. We haven't dug into this story, but he may have actually been done wrong. His father had died, and in the dividing up the estate he got nothing. Now he may have been a horrible son, we don't know the family details. But whatever those

details may or may not have been, he seems he was left out. This man had a real beef– and he had an understanding, expectations, about how things should be. But that’s not the issue. Expecting Jesus to be the arbiter of his issue was not the role Jesus came to fill.

Know that expectations can hold us back. We focus all of our energy, and attention to protecting what we think we deserve, how our life, relationships, everything should be, we aren’t in a position to be open to what Jesus wants to do in our lives. Because we hold onto how we think things are SUPPOSED to be, it makes us resistant to change– to real growth. To move towards fully formed maturity. This question from Jesus surfaces our expectations of what we believe a relationship with Jesus will do for us. And makes us come face to face with our: disappointments, frustrations, the ‘shoulds’ we carry around, assumptions about what life owes us, our understanding of fairness. When we’re not open to God working in our lives in a way we didn’t expect, we miss the real and powerful purpose and role of Jesus in our lives. That’s what happened to this man. Obviously he knew about Jesus. Knew he was wise and unlike anyone else before. But just so missed what Jesus was about. And shortchanged his power. This man, for whatever reason, wasn’t able to make the connection of who Jesus was. AND– who Jesus could be in his life. The purpose of this last question was to get that man to understand where his request, his expectations were coming from. So, we need to let that question ‘question’ our expectations of Jesus.

Who made me the _____ of _____ in your life?

There are two things we can see in this passage.

1. Jesus NEVER said this man’s claim or frustration wasn’t legit. Which kind of leads me to believe maybe this man had a case. Sometimes the things we think are important, we have expectations about those things, are actually real things. But they aren’t really the important things. And we need to be open to that truth. Jesus wanted to help this man figure out where it was coming from.
2. This man let his inner expectations of life dictate his understanding of Jesus. That’s what Jesus addressed. So, we need to wrestle with our expectations also. **Are we living in such a way, open and curious, to allow the spirit to reveal the thing behind the thing?** The thing is never the thing. **It’s always; what’s the thing behind the thing?**

This question brings us back to all of our other questions.

“What do you want?” “Who are you looking for? “Would you like to get well? “What do you want me to do for you?”

These questions are made clearer by this story. They make us face our expectations of Jesus. So– bring all of your expectations to God. Real ones and unrealistic ones. All of your dreams, hopes, expectations, desires, and more to Jesus. BUT– with an open hand, to let him look through them to see what and who Jesus will be in your life. And allow Jesus to reorient your life in the way that we were designed to live. To help you find those things running below the surface of your awareness. The first part of this question of Jesus is the one we need to learn to question our expectations:

“Beware! Guard against every kind of _____ . What are yours?”

Examine your; frustrations, disappointments, assumptions, sense of unfairness, your “should haves”. And I’m telling you, this warning will help you do an honest evaluation of your expectations, and grow your relationship deeper with God. Which is what we’re all looking and hoping for. This is a fantastic place to begin.