

# Unexpected Encounters

Refer to Part 1 of today's message by reading Luke 1:5-25; 39-45.

This Christmas season, we've been talking about the word "Encounter." Have you encountered God this season or year? Do you want one? Let's discuss 3 ways to get ready for an encounter with God.

## **Wait in Anticipation**

1. What does it mean to wait in anticipation? It means to live by faith!

**Hebrews 11:1-3** *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."*

*Conviction (elegchos):* a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested

- Used only twice in the New Testament.

**2 Timothy 3:16** *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,"*

- Our faith is dependent upon God's Word and God's Word alone.
- It's what we filter everything through (including our expectations). The seen and especially the unseen.
- Test all things through the infallible Word of God.
- What does this mean for us? When the Lord speaks, something is going to happen. This is not just for Old Testament/New Testament times, but for us right now in this present time.
- We may not see what's coming, but we live with an anticipation that something is coming. We test (prove) these anticipations through Scripture.

## **Live with Expectations**

This word sometimes gets a bad reputation or leaves a sour taste in our mouths. Expectations are not bad!

*Expectation:* a strong belief that something will happen

Personal Reflection: "I know I have high expectations...mostly for myself. But most of the time I leave myself in disappointment and disbelief."

- Have the desire for something to happen.
- If you can't think of any expectations, hold true to His promises made to us.

**Isaiah 41:10**

*"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

**Deuteronomy 31:8**

*"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

**John 16:33**

*"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

**Matthew 11:28-29**

*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

**Philippians 4:7**

*"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

**Isaiah 54:10**

*"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you."*

Not living with a sense of disappointment if it doesn't happen, but to live in a way that keeps you thriving for something more of what God will be doing.

- Our disappointments come from the desires of man (ourselves).
- When our desires and expectations are filtered and reflected from the desires of God, we will never be disappointed.

*"Healthy expectations are birthed out of anticipation of what God can and will do; unhealthy expectations are founded in what you hope others will think, say, and do. God is the only One capable of meeting and surpassing all your expectations and doing so in a way that makes you say, 'Only God.'" (Quoting "clearly stated")*

**Psalm 118:8** (“man” includes myself)

*“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.”*

“Let our expectations be about His character instead of our circumstances.”

### **Expect the Unexpected**

While it's a known and “famous” quote, do we live expecting for the Lord to move?

#### **3 Questions to Ask:**

1. Do I believe in the Lord's perfect will?
2. Will I still follow Him even if my desires don't happen?
3. Can I accept that the Lord's will is better than my own?

Regardless of where you stand with these questions, expect the Lord to move in unexpected ways.

#### **How do we do that?**

1. Be on Guard. (Be ready).

##### **Mark 13:33**

*“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.”*

This is in regards to Jesus' return. Not to make us live in fear, but to live in anticipation...and to be in step with God.

This reminds us to be in check with the Spirit.

It enhances our anticipation and expectations.

2. Be in Prayer.

##### **Romans 12:12**

*“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”*

3. Be in Word.

##### **Deuteronomy 17:19**

*“And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,”*

Referring all the way back to Levitical priests and following the covenant of the Law. Also specifically for Israel's kings.

#### 4. Be with Others.

The Church (Believers)

##### **1 Corinthians 1:10**

*“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”*

##### **Psalms 133:1**

*“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”*

The Mission Field (Others) – also applicable in the Church

##### **Matthew 5:16**

*“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

##### **John 15:12**

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

#### **Final Thoughts:**

As we look back to our story with Elizabeth, and even Mary, we learn about how to respond to encounters...even the unexpected ones.

- Both lived in anticipation and in faith.
- Elizabeth shows us how to continue living in faith, even after several years of praying the same prayer.
- Mary shows us how to respond to the unexpected. Again...responding in faith. “I don’t know how this is going to happen, but I will do what the Lord is asking of me.”

#### **Ask Yourself:**

- The Lord is going to move and is moving. Do we want to be a part of it?
- Are you waiting for an encounter? Are you expecting an encounter? What will we do with our encounters?
- Will we continue to have belief and expectations even if our prayers aren’t answered? Will we continue to pray bold prayers?
- As we look to the new year, let’s ask ourselves, what are some expectations that God has for us? How will we respond?
- As we look into now (the present) and into 2023, let’s continue to ask: “God what are you up to and how do you want me to be a part of it?”