

**November 29, 2020 James Gallaher**  
**Anticipation and Unmet Expectations**

Christmas brings anticipation. We look forward to coming together as families. We have expectations that this is the year with no family problems, no arguments, and that everyone is happy. We anticipate the awesome food and perfect gifts. The anticipation inside of us will never be satisfied...No matter how well the holiday goes, there is an anticipation that can't be satisfied mostly because of unmet expectations. Hopes get dashed; ungratefulness shows up; desires are not satisfied; things don't measure up; frustration crouches at the door. Psychologists say that all frustrations are birthed in unmet expectations.

Advent is the beginning of expectations – anticipation of what God is going to do. Look at Mary's song in Luke 1 as the angel explains what is about to happen. Mary then begins to sing and explain her heart. **Luke 1:46-55** *And Mary said: My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is to generation after generation toward those who fear Him. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has given help to His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, just as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.*

We need to adjust our expectations and put our anticipation in the right direction. Mary's words in **Luke 1:53**...*He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed.* **Psalm 107:9** *For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, and He has filled the hungry soul with what is good.* **II Corinthians 12:10** *Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, in behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

We tend to view ourselves as being strong or weak on what we do instead of who we serve. Do we ever think or say "at least we are not like so and so"? Do we rationalize not fixing a problem because others do it worse? Human pride runs counter to these words of Paul. Also in **Jeremiah 17:5**... *This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD.*

Paul wants us to surrender our strength – to be willing to give up our ability. The capabilities of the human mind to solve problems is amazing. Surrendering our strength is choosing to no longer do it on our own. It is a choice. It does not mean that we run out of solutions and then we come to God. The hunger is to always come to God – to be done trying to manage our lives. Count our strength as nothing compared to God. Come and choose to put all of our hope in God and not wait until we've exhausted all of self.

Mary recognized where her salvation comes from and that she is the recipient of God's mercy. **Luke 1:48** *For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant.* **Verse 50** *And His mercy is to generation after generation.* Mary recognized her need for a Savior and acknowledges her own inability to do anything apart from that. Our society says we are not in need of anyone and that humility is not a great attribute. True humility is a recognition that we cannot do something on our own! The one God satisfies is always marked by a spiritual hunger. **Verse 53** *He has satisfied the hungry with good things.* TLB

To experience the satisfaction that God has for us then we must come before Him hungry for His purpose in our lives.

**Matthew 5:6** *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*

What are we called to hunger and thirst for? HIS Righteousness. Seek God's righteousness, not self-righteousness that we earn or do on our own. Righteousness has two parts: justification and sanctification. Justification happens when we receive the righteousness of God at conversion – salvation. The other part is sanctification, the lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus. This righteousness is a continual hunger for Jesus.

The challenge with righteousness is that it looks different than happiness. Our own pursuit of happiness does not satisfy and causes frustration. God satisfies the hungry. Hunger is an indicator of a desperate need. When in Ethiopia, saw a mother that had not eaten for two weeks, spending all her time to find food to satisfy the hunger and care for her infant. That's the kind that God wants.

**Isaiah 55:2-3** *Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.* What we hunger for matters. Frustrations come from unmet expectations; unsatisfaction comes from pursuing the wrong kinds of hunger. Satisfaction comes when we hunger for God's righteousness.

If God satisfies with good things, then we need to identify the good thing - a relationship with Him. Then all other things flow out of that relationship. Building a relationship with God rather than doing things on our own. To come to the end of ourselves is a decision. **Verse 53** *And sent the rich away empty-handed.* Christ sends away but those who are full of themselves.

To the church at Laodicea...**Rev 3:17** *Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have no need of anything," and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.* It's our personal perspective of who we are that makes us have no need for God in our lives. We all have our favorite sins - the part you know needs to change but you are rather fond of it. But it's a place that is never satisfied. Jesus talks about wandering through dry places. Are there areas of your life that are dry?

To the church at Laodicea...**Rev 3:20-22** *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me. The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

Those who receive are those that come hungry and with a desire that He will fill us. Eric Liddell is a great example of doing things God's way.

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What is God saying to the dry places? What is He saying to my sins?

What is your favorite sin? Is it ever satisfied?

Are you seeking a satisfaction that you can't find? What can you do about it?

Do you have areas that you are seeking God's blessing without doing things His way?