

Mar 10 – Leader’s Guide – Luke 7:18-35 “Expectations”

Read Luke 7:18-35

1. What are some of our unsaid expectations when it comes to continuing being Christians today, as people who keep following Jesus Christ?

Allow others to share openly about their personal expectations or project other popular expectations about Christianity. For example, there are segments of the Church that expect to be healthy, wealthy, and wise as long as they follow Jesus. Or others expect to see the world become a better place despite the problems and issues. Or others expect to see the Church purified and refined from heresy and false doctrines, etc.

2. Jesus' response to John's question is a quotation from a few pieces of prophetic scripture, implying that messianic prophecies are being fulfilled all along. However, Jesus is fulfilling them in ways that were not initially expected. In what ways do we witness the kingdom of God unfolding in our lives and around us that confound or even disrupt our own expectations?

Again, allow others to share from their own experience and observations. Sometimes, the way of faith is mysterious and does not fit into any of our theological boxes or categories. We can easily write off someone or someone else's experience of God or Jesus because it doesn't make sense to us or that we think it's wrong or just weird. But we are invited to be open, to be humble, to listen first, not to judge, condemn, or be critical. The Spirit blows here and there as He wishes, and we don't know how or where He is going.

3. Jesus condemned the religious crowds for their fickleness in matters of messianic expectations. Jesus called them a bunch of kids who couldn't make up their minds. In what ways do we and the modern church fall into fickleness even in our own faith?

We can be blown over by every wind of doctrine, looking for someone to scratch the itch in our ears, nitpick every boil and blemish on someone's face, or always looking for something to condemn or to be critical about. The Church is still full of religious hypocrites, self-righteous Pharisees, and unthinking and naive religious adherents who are easily swayed by anything that soothes their fears even to their being exploited by greedy and corrupt leaders or preachers.

4. Jesus concludes that wisdom is proved by her children. That is, having childlike faith in Jesus no matter--taking Jesus at His word like a child--is what wisdom looks like. Those who are not offended by Jesus are blessed. How do we foster in ourselves and in others childlike faith? What does childlike faith look like?

We must constantly evaluate our own sets of expectations whenever we feel

rudely awakened by an interruption or disruption in life, when we feel God has owed us, or that we were dealt a bad hand in life. We are invited to healthily question our faith in order to grow it, mature it, strengthen it where it is weak and flagging. We do so in community, not just introspectively with our own self-convinced opinions. We test our conclusions against the witness of Holy Scripture, according to church history, by the teachings of the saints throughout time, and by our own and others' experiences.