

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST – WEEK 2

1 Peter 4:1-6

By Andy Manning

This is part two of a study called “What to expect when you give your life to Christ.”

Last week we learned that **unmet expectations lead to disappointment, and then to conflict.**

Have many of you have been to Chewy’s restaurant? When it first opened up, Lydia and I wanted to give it a try because we love TexMex. But we tend to have a hard time trying new restaurants because we don’t eat out very often, and we hate to waste our money on bad food. But eventually we talked to several people who tried Chewy’s and they raved about it. They said it was awesome. One of those people was my best friend from Baton Rouge. He came to visit one time and he said, “You are so lucky! You got a Chewy’s in Lafayette!” He said he loved Chewy’s. And the parking lot is always full; in fact, the line is almost always out the door. So finally Lydia and I were convinced that we needed to give it a try. So when we got there, the parking lot was full. There was a line of people waiting to get in. Inside it was packed. We were expecting great things. Unfortunately, we were pretty disappointed. We hated the food. We hated the atmosphere – the tables were really close together, and it was really, really loud. So we will never go back to Chewy’s again, and we tell everyone we meet to not go to Chewy’s. And we’re shocked every time we meet another person who loves Chewy’s. And then to top it all off, not only are we really disappointed with the new TexMex restaurant in town, but our favorite TexMex restaurant – Coyote Blues – closed down, probably because all of their old customers are not going to Chewy’s! We had high expectations of Chewy’s, and when they weren’t met we were really disappointed, and now, we are Chewy’s sworn enemies for life. Unmet expectations lead to disappointment, and then to conflict.

The same thing can happen in our relationship with God. If you have unrealistic expectations about the Christian life, then eventually you will be disappointed with God, and then you will rebel against God.

And that's what happens to many Christians.

Many Christians begin the Christian life with unrealistic expectations of God.

They expect from God things that God has not promised.

A big reason for this is false teachers, such as teachers of the prosperity gospel, and the word of faith movement, and the name it and claim it movement.

Many Christians expect that if they have enough faith, if they have enough devotion, if they sow a large enough faith seed, then God will give them everything they want – health, wealth, prosperity, success, etc. And then when God doesn't come through for them, then they get very disappointed with God and rebel against God.

I recently heard about a prosperity gospel preacher who went to preach in a former communist country, where the Christians have been persecuted and have lived in great poverty for decades. The preacher sent out invitations to the community to come to the meeting, and God would heal all of their sicknesses. So a very large crowd showed up for the meeting. But nobody was healed. Not one person. And the people angrily spat on him.

This is why it is very important that your expectations of God be rooted in the truth of Scripture. It is very important that your expectations of God are based on His character and His promises. That your expectations are grounded in reality.

And that's what we're looking at in this study. In **1 Peter 4:1-6**, we can find 5 things to expect when you give your life to Christ. Let's read the text.

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin— 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. 3 For there has already been enough time spent in

doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards.

Let's do a quick review from last week.

The **first thing** you can expect when you give your life to Christ is that **you will suffer**.

Verse 1 says, “since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding.”

In other words, have the same attitude toward suffering that Christ had.

What was Christ's attitude toward suffering? Christ was willing to suffer for good; Christ will willing to suffer for God's will; Christ was willing to suffer for doing the right thing. To put it in another way, Christ was committed to doing God's will, even if it meant suffering and death. We're to have the same attitude, we are to be committed to doing God's will, even if it means suffering.

The implication there is that we will suffer.

You will suffer for your faith in Christ, and you will suffer in spite of your faith in Christ. God does not promise to keep you from pain and suffering.

I was just reading about a young Christian couple who loved and served the Lord, and they had only been married about three months when the young wife, only 23 years old, was instantly killed in a car wreck. God allows Christians to suffer. As a Christian, you can expect to suffer.

But remember the good news.

First, nothing can happen to you unless God allows it, and He will use it for your good and His glory.

Second, God uses our suffering to grow us. Sometimes God allows us to suffer in order to correct us when we are in sin. And sometimes He allows us to suffer in order to perfect us so that we are more glorifying and useful to Him.

And third, the good news is that no suffering is permanent. Eventually you will die, sooner or later, and you will wake up instantly in the presence of God in paradise and never have to experience suffering again.

The **second thing** you can expect when you give your life to Christ is that **you will sacrifice.**

1 Peter 4:2 says, “in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God’s will.”

A Christian is one who fully committed to doing God’s will.

That means you will have to deny yourself at times, and you will have to deny others at times.

And this means you will have to sacrifice.

You will have to lose in order for God to gain.

And your sacrifice will look different than my sacrifice.

You might have to lose money, or relationships, or career opportunities, or your reputation, or security, or comfort, or luxury.

Now let's take a look at **three more things you can expect** when you give your life to Christ.

3. You will stand out.

Look at **1 Peter 4:3-4**. “3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you.”

Notice that unbelievers are surprised when you don't join them in sin.

Christians don't participate in the game of sin that the rest of the world is playing.

And that means Christians are different.

When you give your life to Christ and start living for God's will rather than your will, then you will stand out. You will be different.

So different that people will notice. You will get attention. You will be odd. You will be weird. You will be strange. You will not fit in. You will not be a part of the cool club.

People will notice that you don't curse, or don't drink, or stop smoking, or don't party with them. They will notice when you refuse to cheat, or when you refuse to lie, or when you refuse to steal. They will notice when you don't take drugs, or when you don't want to enjoy the same types of entertainment that you used to.

Not too long ago at work we took a company photo. The day before my boss sent out a memo for everyone to wear their maroon FedEx shirt. And so the next day, I was ready with my shirt on. But I noticed that everyone was also wearing black pants – everyone but me. Apparently the memo sent out by my boss also said to wear black pants, but I missed that part. Out of about twenty employees, I was

the only one in the picture not wearing black pants, and I also happened to be the largest person in the picture. I was so embarrassed.

Being different can be hard. It can be lonely. It can be discouraging.

But here's what you need to remember.

Normal isn't working.

Normal is having a miserable marriage.

Normal is having kids who don't obey you, and teenagers who hate you.

Normal is having sex before you get married, with multiple people.

Normal is having an affair on your spouse.

Normal is being addicted to porn, or drugs or alcohol.

Normal is trying to find happiness and significance by buying things.

Normal is trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Normal is going to hell.

The last thing you should want to be is normal.

That's why the Bible says in **Proverbs 24:1**, "Don't envy the evil or desire to be with them."

Remember that being different is a sign that you are a true Christian.

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

If you are conformed to this age, if you look just like non-Christians, then that's a sign that you are a non-Christian, too.

But if you are different, and if you are willing to be different, even though it is uncomfortable, then that's a sign that you are genuinely saved. So if you are different, be encouraged.

As a Christian, be sure that your goal is not to fit in with the world.

Don't make it your goal to conform to the world around you.

Instead, make it your goal to become more and more like Christ.

4. You will be slandered.

Notice 1 Peter 4:4. "They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you."

Not only will you be different, but you will be slandered. You will be hated. You will be rejected. You will be despised. You will be mocked.

When you follow Christ, you will be different.

Your lifestyle will be **confusing** (they won't understand you), it will be **condemning** (your righteousness will shine a light on their wickedness and make them feel guilty), and it will be **contradictory** (your lifestyle will get in the way of their goals). As a result, you will be hated.

I've told you about the Christians in the first century living in the Roman Empire.

They were accused of all kinds of evil things.

They were accused of being **terrorists** because they were blamed for the great fire in Rome in AD 64.

They were accused of being **atheists** because they did not worship the many Roman gods or the Roman emperor.

They were accused of being **traitors**, because it was believed that their refusal to worship the gods would result in the gods calling down judgment on the Roman empire.

They were accused of being **cannibals** because of the roomers that they ate the body and blood of Christ.

They were accused of **incest** because they referred to each other as brother and sister. They were accused of hatred against the human race. They were hated.

It's the same with Christians today.

Christians are accused of all sorts of evils.

We are accused of hating women, and subjugating women, and of being enemies of gender equality.

We are accused of hating homosexuals and transgenders.

We are accused of hate speech when we say that Jesus is the only way, or when we say that marriage is only between a man and a woman, or that sex is only for marriage, or that God only made two genders.

We are accused of being intolerant, and of wanting to turn the United States into a theocracy.

We are accused of being ignorant and of being enemies of science because we don't believe in evolution.

We are accused of abusing our children because we believe in spanking, and of indoctrinating our children because we teach them to believe the Bible. I could go on and on.

This should not be surprising.

Jesus warned us this would happen in John 15:18-20. “18 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”

Jesus was hated.

Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus was despised and rejected.

He was called a drunkard and a glutton.

He was accused of being a sinner, of breaking the Sabbath.

He was accused of being a Satan worshiper.

He was accused of being a false teacher.

If you’re His follower, you can expect similar treatment.

Don’t expect the world to love you. Don’t expect the world to applaud your holiness; to be impressed with your righteousness; to be pleased with your devotion to Jesus.

Instead, remember that Jesus was hated. Jesus was despised.

And that if the world hates you, too, then that’s a sign that your salvation is genuine.

And remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:11-13. “11 You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

5. You will be saved.

Look at **1 Peter 4:5-6** again. “5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.”

This passage is saying that one day everyone is going to be judged.

All those people who hate you, and are rude to you, and who reject you, and who persecute you, and who laugh at you, if they don't accept Christ they will go to hell for eternity.

What does the Bible say about judgment?

- Hebrews 9:27 says that it is appointed for people to die once, and then to face judgment.
- Matthew 12:36-37 says that there will be a “day of judgment.” See also Acts 17:30-31; Rm 2:16.
- 2 Peter 3:7-13 says that judgment day is also called the “day of the Lord,” and that it will come like a thief.
- Rm 2:5-11 also refers to judgment day as the “day of wrath.”
- 2 Cor 5:10 says everyone must be judged.
- Romans 14:10-12 says that we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. And each of us will give an account of himself to God.
- 2 Cor 5:10 says we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be repaid for what we have done, whether good or evil.
- Rev 20:11-15 says that the judgment seat of God is a great white throne. The final judgment is often referred to as the Great White Throne Judgment.

- 2 Cor 5:10 says that Christ is the judge.
- Matthew 16:27 says that this judgment day will occur when Christ comes back, and Christ will reward (or repay) each person according to what he has done.
- 2 Thess 1:5-10 says that God's judgment is righteous.
- 1 Peter 1:17 says that God judges impartially.
- Mt 12:36-37 says that people will have to account for every careless word they speak.
- Rm 2:16 says all of our secrets will be judged.
- Eccl 12:14 says that God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 says that this will be the final judgment because those who don't know God and don't obey the Gospel will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence.
- Rev 20:11-15 says that on judgment day books will be opened that have a record of all of your good and bad deeds, and then another book called the book of life will be opened. If your name is not in the book of life, then you will be judged according to your works and thrown into the lake of fire.
- John 5:24 says that believers in Jesus Christ will not be judged, but have eternal life.
- Rm 8:1 says that those who are in Christ Jesus will not be condemned.
- Heb 9:28 says that Christ's second coming will not be a day of punishment, but a day of salvation for those who are waiting for Him.

That's what 1 Peter 4:6 is referring to.

Look at it. **1 Peter 4:6** says, "6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards."

Verse 5 said that unbelievers will be judged by God, and verse 6 says this is why the gospel was preached to those who have already died.

Judgment is coming. And those who believe, even though they might be judged by the world as a bad person, they will live in the spirit – they will escape God’s judgment and have eternal life.

In other words, this is what you can expect as a Christian. You can expect to be persecuted and rejected by the world. You can expect the world to judge you as a bad person.

But don’t worry. They will be judged by God and spend eternity in hell. But you, because you have believed the gospel, will have eternal life.

CONCLUSION

Unmet expectations lead to disappointment, and then to conflict.

That’s why you need to make sure that your expectations of God and of the Christian life are rooted in Scripture, and grounded in reality.

Christianity is not a ticket to health, wealth, and prosperity. It is not the guarantee of a life of smooth sailing.

But Christianity, life in Christ, is the best life. It’s the best way to live.

And it’s the only way to eternal life. Jesus said in **John 10:10**, “A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”

When you read the story of Jesus, He didn’t always fulfill people’s expectations, but He did often exceed expectations.

- In Mark 2, a paralyzed man expected healing. Jesus not only healed him, but forgave His sins.
- In Luke 19, Zacchaeus expected Jesus to pass by his house, but Jesus went in his house and saved his soul.

- In Luke 5 the disciples expected Jesus to be a teacher, but he told them where to put down their nets, and they caught more fish than they could haul in.
- In Luke 7 a widow expected to bury her dead son, but Jesus raised him to life.
- In John 6 the disciples expected Jesus to send the multitude home because there was no food, but Jesus fed them with just a few fish and loaves.
- The Jewish people expected the Messiah rescue them from Rome, but Jesus offered to rescue them from sin, Satan, and eternal hell.
- In John 13 the disciples expected to eat the Passover with Jesus, but Jesus washed their feet and taught them about servant leadership.
- The Jewish leaders expected the crucifixion to be the end of Jesus, but He rose from the grave, and that was just the beginning of what would become the largest religion in the world.

Jesus may not give you health, wealth, and prosperity, but what He does give you will be far better than you could have ever imagined.