

Anyone here ever not met someone's expectations? It's a terrible feeling, isn't it? I don't really think it matters if it's a boss or parent or spouse or friend - when someone expects something from you and you don't deliver... for a lot of us, that's a crushing feeling.

I wonder if in the Church, we end up setting people up to fail like that. We expect people to be a certain way, to live their relationship with God the way we do.



I went to a small Christian college (less than 2,000 kids). At this school, we were required to attend Chapel twice weekly. And most days, they'd open chapel with a few songs.

I don't know if you've ever been part of a really emotive worship culture, but this school was just that. Almost as soon as the first guitar chord was played, kids all over the auditorium would raise their hands and start crying as they sang. That was how most of the students worshiped.

Now, I've never been a super musically-expressive person. I'm more comfortable expressing myself in a mosh pit than by raising my hands and crying (but I was pretty sure the university would frown on worship mosh pits). So most chapel days, I just stood and sang. I enjoyed the songs, I connected in the worship. I just didn't raise my hands or cry.

And I felt really guilty. Most chapels, I wondered if there was something wrong with me. If I was missing some key spiritual component that kept me from "getting" whatever everyone had that made them want to raise their hands or cry.

And if my private guilt wasn't bad enough, a friend of mine pulled me aside during my senior year and told me she was really disappointed in me because I was one of the religion kids and I was setting a bad example for all the younger students by not being engaged in the worship.

So there I was... stuck. I desperately wanted to be one of those people who raised their hands or cried during worship because they were so moved. People *expected* me to be moved. But I wasn't. I could do those things, but they'd be fake. And I certainly didn't want to fake it.



Have you ever been there? Felt this divide between who you know you really are and who you think you should be? You compare yourself to someone else and you come up lacking...

It'd be nice if we could have a montage like they do in the movies. The guy's a weakling, so he trains. Weeks and months of training get squeezed into a couple of minutes over catchy song, and suddenly, he's ready!

How cool would it be if we could have spiritual montages? I can't read scripture like that guy does... montage! Suddenly I'm a bible scholar. I can't pray like her... montage! Suddenly I'm

healing disease and casting out demons left and right. I'm just not an emotional worshiper... montage! Suddenly I can't listen to the radio in the car, because the moment a Christian song comes on the radio, I [raise arms].

Of course, there's no such thing as montages in real life. We can't just upload kung fu into our brains. But that's okay!

Our story today teaches us something that we don't have to become someone we're not, that we don't have to try to live someone else's faith or live up to someone else's expectations. We learn from David that in our spiritual journey, we're not called to become someone else. We're not supposed to live someone else's faith. God calls us not to become someone else, but to become more fully ourselves, more fully the person God created us to be.

That's the real problem: often when we don't meet someone else's expectations, it's because we're trying to be someone else. My friend wanted me to look like the other kids at my college. And in our story, a few people were expecting David to be just like Saul.

But God didn't want me to be those other people. God created me to be me. God didn't create David to be Saul. God wanted David to be David.

In our story, we first met David, who grew up a shepherd. He had a stick and a sling, and he had to use those to protect his father's flocks. And he did. When animals attacked, David fought them off.

So David visits his brothers at war, hears Goliath's taunts and volunteers to be Israel's champion. Since he volunteers, he has to go meet Israel's king, Saul. Like everyone else, Saul is skeptical about David's chances. But here's what David says about going after Goliath:

"I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" -- 1 Samuel 17:34-36 (NLT)

After some persuading, Saul relents. And because he genuinely wants David to win, he gives David his own armor:



Then Saul gave David his own armor-- a bronze helmet and a coat of mail. David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.

"I can't go in these," he protested to Saul. "I'm not used to them." -- 1 Samuel 17:38-39 (NLT)

Now, this is where we'd usually get a montage. Everyone expects David to be a warrior like Saul, but he's a scrawny kid. He can't even wear Saul's

armor, so he starts a fierce training regime with Saul, gaining the king's favor and becoming the darling of the court. He gets stronger and stronger, better and better with the sword until he finally beats the king himself when they're sparring. Saul would get up off the ground, look at this boy who has now become a man. And Saul wipes his mouth and says, By God, I think he's ready!

Then David goes out into battle and, with the skills he's learned from Saul, wins in a sword-fight against Goliath!

...except that's not what happened at all:

So David took them off again. He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine." -- 1 Samuel 17:40 (NLT)

David isn't a warrior. He's a shepherd. So David does what he knows. So he goes to fight Goliath not dressed and armed as a warrior, but as a shepherd.

And he wins. As a shepherd.

See, David never could've been a warrior. He would've failed at Saul's formula. He couldn't even wear the armor.



If David wanted victory, he had to do what he knew. He had to go into battle as David, as the person God created and called David to be. He didn't need a montage to help him become someone else. He just needed to be the person God created him to be, and trust that God would do the rest.



So what about you? Who do you think you *have* to be? What expectations are you living under?

A serious question you need to ask is, Are those realistic expectations? Are those expectations calling you to be more fully who you were created to be?

Or are they trying to force you to be someone you're not? Are you living with guilt and condemnation because you're not someone you were never supposed to be?

In struggling through my own journey, I found a lot of freedom in Jesus' Great Commandment. He says we are to

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. -- Mark 12:30 (NLT)

I came to realize that emotion isn't the primary way I connect to God. In most settings, emotion isn't what I lead with. And that's okay, because loving God with all our hearts is only 1/4 of our

commandment. I tend to be an intellectual. I connect with God in really chewing on the words of the songs I sing, I reading Scripture and listening to teaching. In reading books about God and faith.

My worship looks different from a lot of the other kids I went to college with. And that's okay. Christianity isn't a cookie-cutter faith. We're not all supposed to be Sauls. Or Davids. Even though we're all supposed to become like Jesus, that's expressed differently in all our personalities.

So maybe you're a person who connects through the physical world. You love to exercise, to be out in creation. Or maybe you're a person who's deeply introspective. You have a vibrant interior life, and you love to meditate on Scripture or spend a lot of time in prayer. Maybe you tend towards the intellectual like I do.

Or maybe you're one of those emotional people. Maybe you love to lift your hands and cry during worship.

Guess what? All of those are wonderful. God created each of us differently, and we need to love who we've been created to be. There's no one pattern to following God.

David had to fight Goliath the way God created David: as a shepherd. If Saul had risen to the challenge, he would've gone as a warrior, and God would've given him victory, too.

You have to do what you know. Don't try to be someone else. Don't try to be Billy Graham or Mother Theresa or me or Pastor Keven or Joel Osteen or anyone else. God didn't create you to be them. And if you spend all your energy trying to live someone else's faith, you're going to fail. You're going to be exhausted and defeated.

God wants you to be you. That's it. So do what you know. Lean into the person you've been created to be. Because you have no idea what kind of incredible story God wants to tell through *your life*. Not someone else's.

Communion SetUp

Today, we close by observing Communion. Today, you have the opportunity to come to the Table of Jesus with a whole bunch of other people. Just by looking around, you can tell they're not all like you.

You're all from different backgrounds. We all have different stories that have brought us to this place. We all have a whole crazy mess of different personalities and problems.

But.

We've all been rescued by the same Jesus. We're all called now to become like him, to join in with everyone else as a part of his Church, his rescue mission in this world.

When we eat this bread together, we remember that Jesus' body was broken for us, for our sin. No matter who you are, no matter what you've done. All sin. Every person.

When we dip the bread in the juice, we remember that Jesus' blood was poured out for us, to initiate a new relationship between us and God. In Jesus' death and resurrection, we've all been made new, made whole, and called to join in God's kingdom.

When you come today to receive your elements, you will notice a mirror on your table. Would you pause, just for a moment to see yourself? See not who someone else expects you to be. Don't see who you wish you could be.

See a beloved child of God, created uniquely for a purpose here at Beaver Creek Nazarene. Remember that God died for you and is calling you to become the best version of yourself. The version that God created, and the version you can become again through the power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Prayer