

This transcript was developed using an AI-based speech to text generator. We apologize for any typos or other errors.

.

"Be Who You Are In Christ" The Rev. Garrett Lane
(10/01/2023, Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

.

Often we expect that God will act in a certain way
Like in our Philippians and Matthew readings where people have an
expectation
about what God will do and these expectations though can get us into
trouble, right?
especially in situations where people are coming from and you you kind
of know
Maybe where I'm going with this, but if you'll bear with me in your
mind's eye picture a nurse
Picture a nurse in your mind's eye what this nurse is wearing what
kind of scrubs they are wearing the
Lanyard that they are wearing
And I want you to picture that nurse in your mind's eye and it's so
great. I have TVs
I've got a picture of a nurse that's gonna come up
Right now. Maybe you had a picture of a nurse that was not a man.
Maybe it was a woman. I'm not sure
But you have an expectation when someone says nurse of something that
kind of comes into your head, right?
And I have one more I want to do this one's fun
Think of a shepherd think of a shepherd that hangs out with sheep all
day
What this shepherd might smell like
What the shepherd might eat out in the fields and
We'll see if you were thinking of the same shepherd that I was
thinking of a
Border Colley
Right we love dogs
So it's this common theme in good comedy and good film to have
Expectations and to have those expectations upset, right and
You can find it everywhere, but one of my favorite examples of this is
a scene that comes from the 1985 film The Goonies
And if you're familiar with the movie The Goonies
It's these group of friends that have dubbed themselves The Goonies
and they're in search of treasure to save their neighborhood
And to save their home from an encroaching country club development
and in their search

They stumble across this crime family the Fratelli family who is who are in these underground caves searching for the shipwreck with money Money that they can use to buy Basically buy there by their home and that won't go away and one of these Kids you can see them up here poorly named chunk Is a member of the Goonies and he's captured and you can kind of see there's like this little glass thing in front That's a blender and as they're that's they've captured chunk they're interrogating him They want to know where they're searching for the treasure as well and they want to know who are you working with? They can't imagine that it's just a bunch of kids running around And at one point they interrogate him saying Kid I want you to spill your guts and I want you to tell us everything and he obliges and this Fully I'm not going to play the video although looking back now. I probably should But I'll read the transcript He obliges and this always gets me to belly laugh that he's like in the third grade I'd cheated on my history exam in the fourth grade I stole Uncle Max's to pay and glued it on my face when I was Moses in the Hebrew school play And I knocked my sister Edie down the stairs and I blamed it on the dumb Yeah, we're gonna do this one too, but the worst thing I ever done I mixed a pot of fake puket home and I went to this movie theater and he put it in his jacket climbed up on the balcony and made a noise like this And I dumped it all over the side all over the people in the audience and it was horrible And they all started getting sick and throwing up and it just goes on and on and like There are cutaway scenes to like other things happening in the film while he's continuing to do this It's the best But these mixed up expectations Result in hilarity and I know it's a good scene because you're laughing, but also on YouTube It says hilarious in the title when I look up this scene Which is great Expectations can help us to navigate the world around us But we can also find ourselves on the receiving end of such expectations Expectations that are placed on us on our loved ones on our communities all 4.0 students will become Excellent adults, right teachers just love all children and so we don't really have to pay them much

How can you live among all of these Texans I hear from my friends in the Northeast or
Maybe you've heard this one clergy live these pious lives praying and writing sermons all week and that's all we do, right?
Sometimes many times these expectations are meaningless and
Other times these expectations
Expectations lie at the heart of all kinds of prejudices racial prejudices and gender and others
Those expectations that are placed on us and on our lives so often are a statement about our value or
our perceived value
And you don't have to hear it from me to know that many of these expectations are hard to carry
You know the weight of these expectations
Parent of three working from home dealing with keeping everyone happy keeping everything clean
If your family knows at all the pain of addiction, you know these expectations
Breaking that chain is ever present at the forefront of your mind
And even these self-set expectations that people have that can be good expectations to prosper
To work hard they can still weigh heavy
They are not always bad, but they definitely are heavy and our readings today turn
expectations on their head
Thankfully, we are in the same vein of the readings of last week and if you weren't here this week the questions get asked
Is God fair and who is worthy of heaven all?
Questions that we who are at church know the answer to right is God fair to answer number one
No, God is not fair
We talked about this a little last week and number two who is worthy of heaven
According to our readings tax collectors thieves harlot grateful children
St. Paul in this section of the letter to the Philippians
Addresses expectations that others had about who Jesus was
This portion of the letter highlights doubts what we heard read it highlights these doubts that are still echoed today
If Jesus Christ was really God why would he show up as a carpenter?
Why wouldn't he show up as a king ready to throw off the Roman Empire and lead God's people dressed as a king
Speaking like a king spending time with people that kings spend time with
Jesus Christ as you might have heard hardly does any of these things
When he is around rulers he usually denounces them when he is among the learned and religious
He is stumping them when he is among the wealthy. He is exhorting them to give away all of their wealth
He finds himself with outcasts the annoyingly pious

drunkards the poor

Because Christ's mind is not set on self-ambition, but it is set on service on the interests of others and obedience

And we so often so often expect fairness from God if you're anything like me you expect fairness from God

Fairness though is not justice to our God though. We know that God is just

This is the paradox

Sorry, we expect fairness and we are get is within this paradox that especially pious people continue to not understand and we see that in our reading today from Matthew

This is something that we all forget I forget it daily. I get I want fairness

I don't want mercy for the person weaving in and out of traffic slowing things down on my very short commute to work

I want fairness or I want yeah, I want fairness for sure right here

Not mercy for the person that was stealing my tomatoes and melons from the community garden. I live next to I

Wanted fairness. I wanted justice. I want like something for that guy.

I'm assuming it's a guy. I never caught them

But time and time again in the gospels. We hear mercy

Mercy is what we hear in Philippians and in Matthew

Our expectations often the expectations that we put on ourselves are heavy

But we worship a God that tells us that his yoke is easy his burden is light and that if we are weary and if we are tired

You may come to God and God will refresh us

The good word that we hear today is this be who you are in Christ

Mercy abounds

Christ invites us as we are no expectations are attached all of the messy bits all of the saying one thing and then going and doing another thing

All of the picking fights with your partner on a Sunday morning already opened his arms to us and invites us to do the same

He has invited all of creation to do the same

He has already taken the lowest possible form that he could take he has spent time with lowly folks

He has shouldered the weight of expectations

What do you have that he would deny?

The answer which is the reason for Paul's joy in the letter to the Philippians is nothing a

Small portion of this is reflected in our understanding of baptism

Baptism is not exactly some choice that we get to make or that we're making but a recognition of the truth

That's been there for a long time the love of God is mercy and God's presence

Have this mind among you which is yours in Christ Jesus. This is a little different of a translation than what you heard

But I like it and it helps make Paul's point have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus

The mind of Christ this lit way of living in the world is ours already
It is ours because Christ does not have expectations in the way that
we have expectations

There is no expectation only invitation

An invitation to life an invitation to see others not as people to
dominate or compete against
but as holy and beloved and

Philippi with these words make my joy complete

Joy is not dependent on what we do

We are already joyful for what Christ has done

We do not have to muster up some joy from scratch participation in the
life of God is joyful and is enough

Later today if you so desire you can bring your pets to St. Alvin's and
there's a pet blessing

We celebrate St. Francis

Today later

St. Francis you heard a little bit about them are already the St. Care
for God's creation and there's this prayer that is attributed to St.
Francis

It's probably small for you

And this prayer sums up so well some of the expectations and the
paradoxes that the Gospels place on us and

I'll read it

Lord make us instruments of your peace where there is hatred let us so
love where there is injury

Pardon where there is discord union where there is doubt faith where
there is despair hope where there is darkness light where there is
sadness joy

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console to be
understood as to understand to be loved as to love

This bolded part for it is in giving that we receive it is in
partening that we are pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life

There are the prayer offers what we expect and shows that the
invitation of Christ extends to us

Discord to union darkness to light injury to pardon the invitation to
life

Through Christ through what Christ has done is a joyful thing

So I tell you again be who you are in Christ mercy abounds

It is the one thing that we can't expect let us pray

Holy God your mercies are new every morning

Open our hearts to hear your word to serve your people and to take joy
and your presence among us

Trusting and serving you in holiness and righteousness all our days

All this we asked through your will through your son our Lord Jesus
Christ who reigns with you in the Holy Spirit one God now and forever

Amen