

8.14.16 Proclamation

O. Intro: Expectation

*She has severed every relationship in her life over the years...including parents, children, grandparents, friends, co-workers...largely because of her perpetually unmet expectations

-It has always been a matter of time before someone hurts her, disappointments her, fails to meet her expectations.

-I haven't seen her in many years...but I know she is hurt...and alone.

*Expectations are an important part of relationship health...you might think the opposite from the story I just told.

*But expectations themselves are not the problem.

*When there are low expectations...relationships fail to thrive...in fact if there are **no** expectations its hard to imagine there being a relationship at all.

*Expectations are what you believe are the roles, responsibilities, limits, privileges, goals, possibilities...of the relationship.

*Expectations are normal, important...but they can be problematic.

*Expectations...can become a problem when they are:

-Unknown

-Uncommunicated

-Unrealistic

***Unknown:** We don't even know they are there, we move through relationships being perpetually offended or confused because we carry expectations that we are unaware of.

***Uncommunicated:** Other times we are aware of our expectations but we assume our friend, spouse, co-worker should automatically be aware as well.

***Unrealistic:** Then there are expectations that are just simply unrealistic.

-But that does not keep us from holding to them and becoming angry or despondent when they are not met.

***I read about a man whose newborn twins perished in a hospital fire in Iraq on Tuesday.**

-Cried out to the reporter, "I want my baby boy and girl back. The government must give them back to me."

-We sympathize with his grief...and he probably did not actually believe the government could bring back his children...but he does reveal an expectation that the government should have prevented this from happening.

-Is that a realistic expectation?

What do you expect from God?

What should you expect from God?

*Some might say..."We should expect nothing from God...he is God!"

*I can't see how that would be a good approach...when God has made a covenant with us, promises to us.

*It seems that having faith, having relationship with God requires living with a set of expectations...he certainly has some of us.

*Its important, I think, to consider your expectations of God...you likely do have them.

*It is essential that they are realistic...in this case meaning...they are actually in line with what God has promised us.

*I think expectations that are out of line with what God has said he will do, or with what life is really all about...can lead to much disappointment and disillusionment.

*This can hamper us in our believing, living, and proclaiming.

*I had a book given to me entitled "Bible Promises"

*A lot scripture in different categories...all "Promises".

*The problem with the book was that it implied all the scriptures included in it were applicable directly to me.

*But some were made by God specifically to people or a person in a set time and place...if I expected God to keep that "promise" to me...I was likely to be disappointed.

*So often it's a misunderstanding of the Scriptures...what I can legitimately apply to my life and what I cannot.

*We might call this a "head" problem...not having full or good information or understanding about what God has promised.

*Other times its a more of a "heart" problem...we want something to be true, or something to not be true...so we refuse any information to the contrary.

*Our expectations turn into our demands..."God you must do this...or you cannot be trusted."
-He must do it not because he must be true to his promises, but because I demand he do it.

1. Liberation theology: Promised freedom from poverty & oppression through political change

*More popular in the 60-70's but still around.

*Took root in central and South America

- *Jesus came primarily to over turn social/governmental structures that oppressed the poor.
- *Salvation is now and it is social/cultural/structural in nature...not spiritual, eternal
- *Christians and churches got beyond some of these liberation theology revolutionaries...who proved to be great disappointments.

2. Prosperity gospel: Financial wealth and physical health are guaranteed through giving or believing enough.

- *Popular in America...but really thriving in South America and Africa...often among the poor.
- *The message that God wants you wealthy and healthy...is drawing people in...but not making them into disciples or leading to spiritual resiliency.
- *I quoted a church leader in Africa recently who said his church members are "one unanswered prayer away from returning to ancestor worship."
- *On pastor in Brazil is on Forbe's list of Billionaires...his group of churches have brought him tremendous wealth...much coming from the poor hoping to get rich by giving money away in order to get more back in return.
- *This theology also ultimately ends in disappointment.
- *As you can imagine most stay poor (financially)...God has not promised to make you financially rich no matter what you believe or do...
- *Rich is a relative term anyway...if you live with clean indoor running water, a fridge with food, AC, medicine...you are rich compared to the vast majority of all who have ever lived...including kings of old.
- *All still eventually become ill...no matter how much faith they have...even if they are healthy until the day they die...death is certainly not physical health
- *Most who embrace these expectations live in some degree of denial...because their faith does not protect them from poverty, illness or other troubles that people face.
- ***So what can we expect?**
- *This month we are focusing on "proclamation"...speaking of who God is and what he has done.
- *Part of this, of course...means we are proclaiming what God can do for others as well.
- *We proclaim what he has done, is doing and will do.
- *So what can we expect...what do we tell others to expect?
- ***The Cycle of: Live...believe...proclaim.**
- ***Today...examine expectations...and their bearing on our proclamation.**
- *Remember: we are NOT talking about "Telling people you don't know what they don't want to hear."

*We are talking about living in relationship with people and telling them what is most important to us and to them...emancipation proclamation...the gospel.

Psa. 71:1 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. 2 Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me. 3 Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. 4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. 5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. 6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. 7 I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. 8 My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. 9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. 10 For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. 11 They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." 12 Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me. 13 May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace. 14 But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. 15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. 18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come. 19 Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? 20 Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. 21 You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. 22 I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. 23 My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you — I, whom you have redeemed. 24 My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.

*What is the story told here in the Psalm?

*This Psalm, taken together with the rest of scripture tells the story of the gospel.

*The Bible is not a set of God's rules 1-1000, or a list of great spiritual ideas, or stories of faith heroes.

*It is single story...the story of the Gospel.

*God acting in human history and human lives to redeem us...the OT points us forward to Jesus, the New reveals Jesus to us.

*"Jesus is in the Old Testament concealed and in the New Testament revealed."

*The storyline goes from Genesis to Acts.

*There are letters to churches after Acts

*But the historical narrative ends with Acts...And Acts ends without an ending.

*It ends with Paul in a rented house, proclaiming the kingdom of God...teaching people about Jesus...then it just sort of stops.

*We don't know what happens to Paul, or what happens next in the storyline...not from the Bible.

*After the letters...comes Revelation...we know how it all ends.

*But From Act 28--To Revelation...is where we live now.

*Its why Acts sort of ends without ending...

*The scriptures are complete...the story is not...it is unfolding still.

*Christ is the central character that ties all the Bible and human history together...but we have been written into his story.

***"Every story in the Bible points not to us and how we can have our best life now, but first to Christ and how everything God orchestrates leads to redemption in him." Core Christianity, Michael Horton.**

*So there is one set of expectations if you believe you are the star of your own story...these are ultimately going to disappoint.

*There is another set of expectations if you are a part of the story of the Gospel...not the star, Jesus is, but you are still a part of it.

*Back to Psalm 71.

*The Psalm writer knows he is not the star of his own story (a common, and destructive worldview)...he knows his own story is part of the much larger story of God.

*So since he is not the star of the story...it influences how he sees God and his life.

*But since he has been written into the story by God...he is not just a passive, uninvolved spectator...this also influences how he sees God and his life...his expectations.

***Let's see what we can learn about this fellow's storyline:**

1. He has been on a long journey with God.

- "God you have been my confidence since youth"

- "From birth I have relied on you (my whole life, as long as I can remember)"

2. He has experienced many hardships in his journey with God.

- V. 7 "I have become like a portent (port-ent) to many"

- Portent=sign, omen...God has cursed you.

- His life is hard enough to look like God is making an example of him.

- "You don't want to be this guy"

- People want him dead

- He often feels alone and forsaken.

- He acknowledges God's sovereign purposes in his hardships "Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter..."

3. He continually puts his hope in God through all of it.

- "Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again."

- I have become like a portent, but you are my strong refuge

- "People say I'm cursed by you, but I run to you"

- "People say, 'get him,' God has forsaken him...he's easy prey"

- "I say, God come get me"

- I will always have hope, I will praise you more and more.

4. He proclaims what he knows to be true...it is not about him...it is about God.

- "My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure."

= I'm going to speak of your power and love...but I don't know the full extent of it.

- "I will proclaim your mighty acts"

- "I will declare your marvelous deeds"

- "I will proclaim your righteousness, **yours alone.**"

*He's not spending his life talking about his own great storyline...but God's

18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

*Do not forsake me (be done with me) when I'm old until I have told the next generation about you.

*"Keep me active in the story line...until I have passed on the story of your greatness to the next generation."

What do we learn about this man's expectations?

1. He expects God to be faithful throughout all of his life.

2. He expects his life to include all kinds of trouble.

3. He expects God to be his final salvation.

4. He expects that his life will in the end be validated and those who have opposed him and God will find their lives invalidated...wasted.

What kinds of choices follow his expectations?

1. He talks to God, a lot, about what he hopes, wants, expects and believes.

2. He takes his troubles, fears, and problems to God.

3. He lives with a hopeful expectancy. (Which is an ongoing choice)

*We tend to think "hope happens" to us or it doesn't.

*Hope is like the wind...blows where it wants, we can't control it.

*But hope is a choice, an on going decision.

*Groopman's "Anatomy of Hope"...hope has real outcomes in our physical lives...how much more when it is founded on hope in God.

4. He lives with purpose..."Let me live long enough and stay engaged so that I can pass on your investment in me to the next generation...let me tell them of your story...how you wrote me into it."

***His purpose includes proclamation...telling God's story to others.**

Expectations: Belief/Life/Proclamation: Tell two stories

1. Roman 40

*In 320 a group of Roman soldiers assigned to the Legion 12, called the "Thunderbolt Legion" were deployed to Armenia.

*The Roman emperor had ordered that all soldiers in his army show loyalty by offering a sacrifice to him.

*Forty soldiers of the Thunderbolt refused because of their faith in Christ.

*The governor of Armenia, Agricola was bewildered ""But what about your comrades?" he asked.

"Consider--you alone of all Caesar's thousands of troops defy him! Think of the disgrace you bring upon your legion!"

"To disgrace the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is more terrible still," replied the men.

*Exasperated, the governor threatened to flog and torture them. The soldiers stood firm, although they knew he would carry out his threat.

*Pairs of guards seized each man and dragged them out into the cold where they were stripped and tied to posts. Whips laid open their backs and iron hooks tore their sides. Still the forty refused to comply.

*Agricola chained them in his dungeons.

*Finally, he commanded that they be stripped naked and driven onto the ice of a pond below the town of Sevaste.

*Through the night they huddled together and sang hymns (Psalms, maybe?).

*Finally one soldier gave up and left the 40 and ran to the fires and the hot baths that had been prepared to lure the men off the ice.

*One of the guards watching the men through the night...hearing and seeing their proclamation of faith...suddenly removed his own clothes and joined the 39 on the ice. All 40 died there.

*So what do you think of this story?...I first heard it when I was in college...challenged me, perplexed me...caused me to evaluate, think about my own faith, my life, my expectations, my proclamation.

*It does the same thing to me still.

*What were their expectations?

*We don't know all of them...but certainly they did not expect God to keep them from suffering or harm...just because they had great faith and commitment.

*I didn't quote all of the story...but they expected to receive eternal life after this life is over...that was part of kept them on the ice.

*They expected Christ to be honored by their words and life of faith...but I doubt they expected that a church halfway around the globe 1700 years later would be challenged, provoked by their story.

2. Norah

*Now, I want tell a personal story, most of you are aware of...I don't tell it to imply that we have suffered much...we have not.

*But I want to proclaim what is personal to me...how expectations, belief, proclamation mash together in the life of my family.

*I say "mash" rather than "fit" because "mash" implies mess..."fit" implies a simple order.

*Things "fit" in the great mind and life of God...they "mash" in my mind and life.

*My belief, life, proclamation, my family's story is often messy.

*I tell you this story...I proclaim it...not because it is more special than yours...it is not.

*You have and will continue to have a story to tell...but what makes a life story powerful...is when you surrender your life to Jesus...and are written into his story.

***I'll start with expectation**...mine...I do not and did not expect God to give me and those I love health all the time.

*I pray that he will...I want it...but I have not expected it...he has not promised it...I have not had it...my family not had it.

***Belief**...I believe that God is good, and faithful...though I often don't understand his ways.

*Like our Psalmist "**I will tell of his righteousness...though I know not its measure.**"

*I can't get my mind around it...

***Life and proclamation**...let's move to my daughter Corrie for that.

*Curtis and others in our family have struggled as well of course...but I'll simplify the telling of the story by using Corrie as the character in this part of it.

*Corrie...did not have an expectation that God would keep her and her children from all harm...but she had a great desire, hope that he would...prayed that they would.

*So when Norah suffered...she suffered

*What did Corrie expect? What did she really expect? What did she believe?
-Those expectations, these beliefs were tested...squeezed to see what was really inside.

*What did Corrie do as she was and is squeezed?

*She suffered.

*She asked God to take the cup...heal Norah. Let there be another way...legit prayer...Jesus prayed it.

*In the hospital last summer (and since then) she struggled with her beliefs and doubts..."God why?"...legit prayer, she is not Jesus, she is a normal woman.

*In the hospital...and since then...as she struggled...she has proclaimed God's story to others in the NICU at Children's mercy...nurses, parents, friends.

*On the internet to people across the globe who have children like Norah.

*She proclaimed the goodness of God in the midst of the mess.

*This is an example of our story being written in to his story...what God is doing through the ages to bring people to relationship with him and to deepen the relationship with those who know him.

*"Why is he so cruel?" "Look at what he does or at least what he could stop."

*Today is not for a defense of God's goodness and power in the face of suffering...so I will simply say...he is not cruel...far from it.

*Many of God's people through the ages have lived, believed, proclaimed in the midst of great trouble...

*Their expectation was that God would be faithful...he is righteous...though they knew not the full measure of his righteousness.

*We don't live ideas...have ideas...we live stories...stories are messy...but they are real.

*Its not just "your story and my story"

*Our stories only, ultimately, make sense in the context of his story.

*Is God there?

*Has God spoken? How can we know?

*What is our problem, solution, purpose?

*The Gospel is the story of God written in history, written in Scripture...written on the hearts of believers.

*It is not about me or you...but the one who has chosen to write us into his great story.

***So when we try to make it about us...it all becomes meaningless.**

*You know how this works...if you pay attention...if you try to make life about yourself in order to make it meaningful...meaning flees from you.

*When we make it all about him...it all becomes full of meaning.

*What we believe matters for how we live.

*What we live matters for what we believe.

*What we live and believe matters for what we proclaim.

*What we proclaim matters for what we live and believe.

***What do you expect from God?**

*Students...you can turn from God to someone or something else...because God is not meeting your expectations...or you doubt that he will...you can believe that there is an alternative to life with God that will make you happy.

*And that someone or something else will fail you and leave you empty...this is not just a possibility this is a certainty.

***If you are turning old and grey...not young anymore...maybe you feel the tug of cynicism.**

*What **did** you expect? What happened to those expectations?

What will you do next with your life?

***What will you expect now?**

*Cynicism expects nothing...except disappointment.

***But if are a follower of Christ...you cannot be the cynic.**

***You must live with expectancy...You can expect that God will be faithful...**

*What does it mean for you...what are the implications?

*In the context and confines that are your life...in the mess that is your story.

*What will you believe, live and proclaim?

*Will you...right now...in the mess....

*Walk with Jesus...like our Psalmist...on the long walk.

*Living with expectations that God will be faithful.

*That he will save you, he will validate the outcome of your faithful life.

*Will you Live, believe, and proclaim...what God has promised...nothing more, nothing less.

*John Mellencamp wrote and recorded a song that defines the life of many..."Oh yea, life goes on. Long after the thrill of livin is gone."

*About 120 years earlier Thoreau said the same thing "Most men live lives of quiet desperation."

*This is not how it is has to be...this need not be your storyline.

*The Psalmist gives an alternative storyline for your life.

***Ps 71:14 But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.**

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Intro:

What do you expect from God?

Read:

Psa. 71:1 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. 2 Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me. 3 Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. 4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. 5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. 6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. 7 I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. 8 My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. 9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. 10 For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. 11 They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." 12 Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me. 13 May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace. 14 But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. 15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. 18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come. 19 Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? 20 Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. 21 You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. 22 I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. 23 My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you — I, whom you have redeemed. 24 My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.

Discuss:

1. "Every story in the Bible points not to us and how we can have our best life now, but first to Christ and how everything God orchestrates leads to redemption in him." "Core Christianity" by Michael Horton.

*Discuss this quote...why you think it is true (or not).

*Why do you think he found it necessary to say at all?

2. What can you learn about the Psalmist's life story from this Psalm? Walk through it together.

3. What can you deduce about his expectations regarding God and life?

4. What are some actions/attitudes you can see that flowed from these expectations?

Apply:

*Tell stories...start with the Gospel. What has God done to save us? Then tell some ways he has written you into his great story.

Psalms

Disorientation to Reorientation



Unknown

Uncommunicated

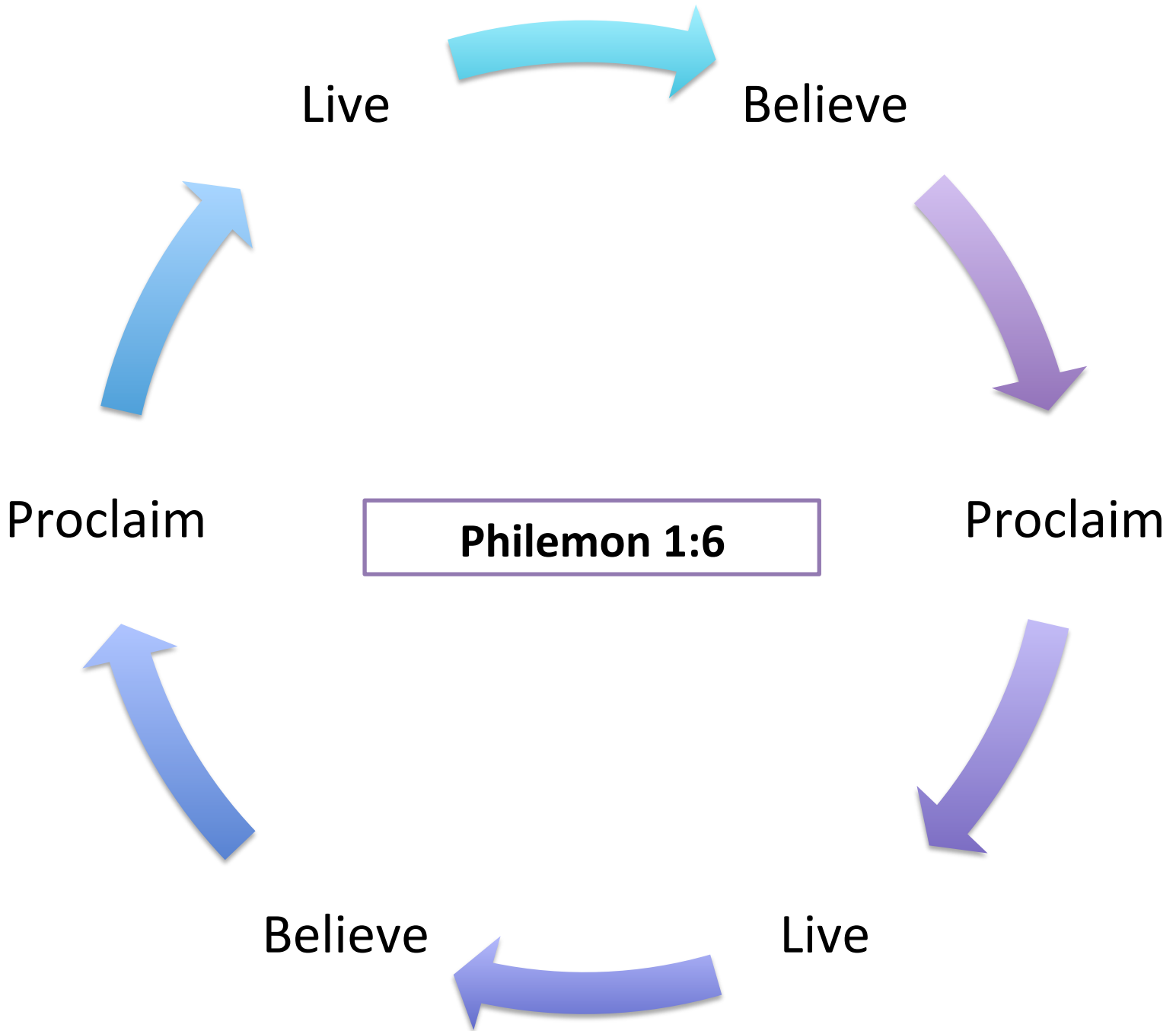
Unrealistic

What do you expect from God?

Liberation Theology

Prosperity Gospel

What can we expect?



Psalm 71

The Bible is a single story

Scripture is complete...the story is not

"Every story in the Bible points not to us and how we can have our best life now, but first to Christ and how everything God orchestrates leads to redemption in him."

M. Horton

- 1. He has been on a long journey with God**
- 2. He has experienced many hardship in his journey with God**
- 3. He continually puts his hope in God**
- 4. He proclaims what he knows to be true about God**

**Psalm 71:18 Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your
power to the next generation, your might to
all who are to come.**

1. He expects God to be faithful

2. He expects his life to include trouble

3. He expects God to be his final salvation

**4. He expects God to validate the outcome of
his life**

1. He talks to God

2. He takes his problems to God

3. He lives with hopeful expectancy

4. He lives with purpose...to tell God's story

