Expecting Wonderful Things
Ephesians 3:20

Objective: Get people excited about what God can do.

Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21.

Memory: Ephesians 3:20. “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us…”

Introduction:
1. Most of us would say; there is nothing really special about me. Or the church where I worship. We are kind of ordinary.
2. I read how God did wonderful things through people in the Bible, but they were somehow special. I don’t expect God to use me or work with me in that sort of way.
3. Folks, we serve the God of heaven who spoke the worlds into existence! We ought to expect God to do great things in our lives.

We ought to expect God to do great things in our lives. (WHY?)

Paul encourages the Christians at Ephesus that God can and does work with them. They shouldn’t look for or accept a half-hearted Christianity. Or a half-baked success in their spiritual efforts. They should expect amazing things to happen as a result of Christian efforts. Let’s look at why Christians should expect wonderful things to happen in their lives.

Because Almighty God, The Father Son and Holy Spirit has Power and Potential to do

I. Immeasurably More Than We Ask Or Imagine.

A. His ability to grant our requests is limitless!
   3. Open the eyes of someone’s heart so they will come to know God.
   4. Strength to resist temptations, drugs, etc. Strength and wisdom to overcome past failures.
   5. Friends to end my loneliness…
   6. Life renewal. In spite of failures and inadequacies! A start-over!

B. Sometimes things don’t happen because we don’t think to ask!
   1. James 4:2b, “...You do not have, because you do not ask God.”
   2. If we are genuine, we should pray earnestly. God is ready and able to grant requests. His ability to do so is limitless …but...

C. We should understand that there are limits.
   1. Not on His abilities, but on what He will do. Can not tell Him what to do, we can only ask.
   2. James 4:3. “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”
   3. Don’t expect illegal or ungodly requests to be granted.
   4. Don’t expect selfish or harmful requests to be granted.
   5. Things will transpire on His time scheduling, not ours.
   6. John 15:7, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”
   7. It needs to be something in accord with His “name”. His “will”. His character. His Spirit.

D. God has demonstrated this ability.
   1. To do what we can ask and way beyond what we ask. Recall some Biblical examples.
   2. Pharaoh decrees all the baby boys be thrown in the river. Moses’ mother presumably prays for him. He is left amongst the reeds and found by Pharaoh’s daughter. Raised in the palace! But she needs a wet-nurse, so Moses’ mother is hired/paid to come and raise him. Imagine!
   3. 2 Chronicles 20: Moabites and Ammonites come to attack Jerusalem with a “vast army”, Jehoshaphat prays to God for help. When He goes out to do battle, he finds only dead bodies because the three groups that we coming to destroy Jerusalem turned and ambushed each other. It took all of Jehoshaphat’s army 3 days to pick up all the plunder and they didn’t even have to do battle!! Who could have imagined!
   4. Ezra 5 and 6: Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates tried to forcibly put a stop to the rebuilding of the temple and city walls of Jerusalem. The Jews pray to God and send a letter to Emperor
Darius who searches and finds authorization for the rebuilding in the archives of Emperor Cyrus. He then orders Tattenai to not interfere upon pain of death, and more than that, requires him to pay for the work!!! Ezra 6:8-9, “The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem—must be given them daily without fail.” Beyond what they hoped for or imagined!

5. Martha could imagine that Jesus could have saved Lazarus if He was there — who could have imagined raising him from dead after rotting 4 days?
6. Peter wasn’t catching fish; “Throw your nets on the other side”; so many they needed help!
7. Feed these men? With two loves and 5 fish, and pick up 12 baskets of leftovers? (Matt. 14:20)
8. Calmed the stormy seas. Walked on water. Enabled Peter to walk on water.
9. He made people to walk again. People’s hearts and attitudes healed. Racial prejudices gone.
10. Tore down the barriers between Gentiles and Jews and brought the 2 racially prejudices peoples together from culturally different backgrounds and traditions and enabled them to work together with a common spirit and purpose. Together as one man.
11. He can and will do the same sorts of things today for you!
12. What can you imagine? Whatever problems you are facing, whatever unfixable situations you have, You might think “Even God couldn’t fix this.” Oh Yes He can!!!

And expect to see such wonderful things happen in your life and efforts, because this Power is operative

II. According To His Power That Is At Work Within Us.

A. “Us” is Christians.
   1. People who’s hearts and souls belong to God in Christ Jesus. Who are living as children of God by His spirit. That’s where God is at work. In “us”.
   2. God’s intention is to bring the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6b) to all people. To make Himself known, using folks like you and me.
   3. To those NOT living this way, no promise is made. No reason given to expect prayers answered.
      a. If you are living contrary to God’s wishes, don’t expect God to do what you ask..
      b. If you are knowingly willingly living in sin, don’t expect to be answered.
   4. To those who are living as Christians, the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available and operative. That is, in you and in the church.

B. God’s power is working to accomplish things within us.
   1. Ask, and see God transform your life. Beyond what you could imagine.
   2. Ask, and watch the church attain the measure of the divine fullness, maturity in Christ. Ephesians 3:19, “and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”
   3. Ask, and watch unity and perfection develop in the church – beyond what you can imagine.
   4. Ask, and watch how you are strengthened, and enabled to stand faithful.
   5. Ask, and see yourself come to fuller knowledge and understanding of Divine principles.
   6. Ask, and see what visions God gives you of what we can accomplish to glorify God.
   7. Ask for courage to speak and stand for truth and righteousness and watch His power work.

C. God’s power is working to accomplish things through us.
   1. Thus illustrating the very nature of God. (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Truth. Integrity.)
   2. Enabling us to imitate Christ in all things and at all times. To bring glory to God through us.
   3. Ask and watch Him use you and the church to bring healing to a hurting world.
   4. Ask and witness the healing in your own life and watch Him help you to heal others as well.
   5. Ask and watch your ability to teach classes, individuals to proclaim the Good News grow.
   6. Ask and watch Him open doors for reaching other souls.
   7. Ask, and see God use you to open people’s hearts to know Him.

We can expect Him to do these things, and beyond what we can even imagine, because

III. God Will Be Glorified.
A. God’s glory is the goal of the church.
   1. God will be made known and glorified in the world. Presently in the here and now. To individuals, (friends and neighbors and associates) and to entire nations. Such is not too great a thing for our God to accomplish.
   2. He is also being made known in eternity and to heavenly powers... Ephesians 3:10-11, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, "according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
   3. It is right, good and just that God be made known. He is Creator of all.
   4. His plan is to make Himself known. This will happen. He has the power and wisdom to accomplish this beyond what we can imagine, and...

B. The church is His primary tool.
   1. You and I, if we are Christian, are a part of this. This is the purpose of our existence.
   2. It is our job. We were created for such good works.
   3. Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” That includes you and me in the here and now.
   4. Romans 16:25-27, “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”
   5. Let Him be seen in you. Stand up and acknowledge Him with your life. Let Him transform you to where He is the very life seen to be living and abiding in you.

So What?
   Have confidence in the power and working of God to accomplish His will even through you, way beyond what you can even imagine. Expect God to be doing great and amazing things in your life.

Closing Prayer:
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**Memory:** Ephesians 3:20.

“N_t_h_w_i_a_t_d_i_m_t_a_w_o_i_, a_t_h_p_t_i_a_w_u…”

**We ought to expect God to do great things in our lives.**
Christians should expect wonderful things to happen in their lives.

I. **Immeasurably More Than We Ask Or Imagine.**
A. His ability to grant our requests is limitless!

B. Sometimes things don’t happen because we don’t think to ask! [James 4:2b]

C. We should understand that there are limits. [James 4:3, John 15:7]

D. God has demonstrated this ability. [Ezra 6:8-9]

II. **According To His Power That Is At Work Within Us.**
A. “Us” is Christians. [2 Corinthians 4:6b]

B. God’s power is working to accomplish things *within* us. [Ephesians 3:19]

C. God’s power is working to accomplish things *through* us.

III. **God Will Be Glorified.**
A. God’s glory is the goal of the church. [Ephesians 3:10-11]

B. The church is His primary tool. [Ephesians 3:20-21, Romans 16:25-27]

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