

# THE JESUS ULTIMATUM

DAVE BRICKEY

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## EXPECTATION

Expectation shapes our experience. It either sets up extreme satisfaction or extreme disappointment. Expectation drives our preparation; it defines the scenarios we think about, and defines for us how things should occur. Yet, not all things meet our expectations. A vacation destination is not as wonderful as we would have imagined, a restaurant did not live up to its hype, or a friend wasn't there when we expected them to walk us through a tough spot. Expectation shapes our experience. We look at role models around us and we gain an expectation to be like that role model; yet, we can't drive a slap shot into a net, play a guitar solo, or solidify that promotion to the "next level".

**JOURNAL OR DISCUSS:** What were your expectations when you decided to follow Jesus? What did you expect would happen, and what really happened? Did you face disappointment? Were you pleasantly surprised? Be detailed. How have your expectations change? What expectations do you have of Jesus today? Explain.

## FOLLOW ME

**Matthew 4.18-22 (HCSB)** 18 As He was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. 19 "Follow Me," He told them, "and I will make you fish for people!" 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him

Discipleship, with Jesus, is summed up in about two words, "Follow Me". Its an invitation that comes from a place of love, from a place the Apostles could not see at the time this invitation was given. Yet, when Jesus spoke these two words, the disciples dropped everything to follow Him. Fishing wasn't a hobby to Simon, Andrew, James, and John; it was a profession, a family trade, and how they supported their families. Jesus picked men that were not the top of the class; He picked men that were questionable in character, meager in means, and not the most educationally accomplished. Yet, when Jesus called to them, they gave Jesus the respect of a renowned rabbi. Jesus reached out to these men and was telling them they could be like Him. Today, these choices would look like bad leadership. As a professional, I look for the most qualified candidates that will deliver results the fastest, yet Jesus chose men that people probably had limited expectation of. This would seem a tall order for a ministry that would train for only three years.

Jesus' church is for everyone. He demonstrates this with active choices and examples throughout His ministry. The church is not a club for the wealthy, worldly elite, or the highly educated (while they do qualify) – it is for the authentic heart. Read **Luke 18.9-14**.

**JOURNAL OR DISCUSS:** Was there something about your character that perhaps you thought “disqualified” you from Jesus? What was it? Do you ever think of how Jesus treasures you specifically? Think of the most detestable thing about yourself in your eyes. How would Jesus respond to this? How has He responded to you about it? Explain.

## BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The Bible doesn't only give us the polished version of each person it introduces us to; it reveals the doubts, the sin, as well as the successes. Take Peter for example; during His entire time with Jesus, Peter was delusional. Peter's harsh and idealistic approaches seemed to reveal a man who was not paying attention to his Master's teachings. There are four instances where Peter was not dialed into Jesus' plan.

1. **PURPOSE BIGGER THAN US.** Read **Matthew 16.22-23**. Peter's expectation was that he was destined to a man of importance. Peter boldly rebukes Jesus, and to that Jesus responds by comparing Peter's wishes with Satan's. There was a purpose bigger than the suffering that was about to occur. Following Jesus does not necessarily mean less pain. There is a peace and hope bigger than the pain and there is a purpose brought out of the circumstances, despite our expectations. Read **John 16.33**.
2. **FOCUS OF SELF.** Read **John 13.6-8**. After the last supper, Jesus begins to wash the disciples feet. This was a job reserved for the lowest of servants, and in Peter's mind a King was not to do this. Jesus' response was predicated on service and He explained to Peter that if he did not allow Him to wash Peter's feet, Peter would not be part of Jesus. Peter's heart was being calibrated and taken off the wobbly course world order. The focus was not on one's self, but on the service of others; there were kingdom-focus principles being learned.
3. **THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED.** Read **Matthew 26.50-53**. Here in the garden, when Jesus is being taken, Peter takes it upon himself to draw a sword and cut off an ear. Jesus quickly corrects this “Van Gogh” moment, by healing the victim. Peter was not understanding the teachings; Love our enemies (read **Matthew 5.43-48**) and much more. Peter forgets it all in this moment and takes the road well traveled by the world.
4. **OVERESTIMATED VIRTUE.** Read **Matthew 26.33-35**. Jesus predicts Peter's denial, and Peter vehemently declares he will not do that. Peter was clearly over-estimating his ability to perform and he folded under pressure. Yet, a mere rooster crowing is God's earthly signal to Peter that the strength of his virtue was weak and reveals the false expectations Peter had of himself.

**JOURNAL OR DISCUSS:** When you look at these examples of Peter, can you see yourself? Have you denied knowing Jesus, thought you had more authority than you did, or maybe you got caught up in the what the world's expectations and not God's? Explain. How has God gotten your attention in these circumstances?

## REFINERS FIRE

Jesus called you to follow Him because He loves you (read **John 3.16-17**). Jesus came to gather us to Him and not to condemn. Read **John 12.44-50**. Jesus desires us to follow Him.

The love Jesus has for you does not mean that He wants you to stay where you are. Read **1 Peter 1.7**, **1 Peter 5.10**, **Job 23.10**, and **Romans 8.28**. He does not desire the status quo. We are the sum of our experiences and our expectation should be for change and an alignment in our lives with the virtues of Christ. We have been called out of bondage and into freedom. Jesus calls us to a posture of surrender, so that our expectations become His expectations. There is no shame or guilt, only an unconditional love.

**JOURNAL OR DISCUSS:** How has God refined you? Did you feel loved or forgotten by God in the process? What was the result? Discuss. As you read the verses above, do you see how they tie together? What do they speak to you? Describe. Is there anything keeping you from a posture of surrender? What do you continue to hold onto, what expectations, that you are not allowing changing into Christ's expectations? If these expectations morphed, how would your life be different?

## DEVOTIONAL

As a small group, access the Weekly Devotional by going to [www.chapel.org](http://www.chapel.org), go to the **GROW** link at the top of the page and select **WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS** from the dropdown and then select **JESUS IDENTITY: WEEK THREE**.

## PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at [gabrielslyric@msn.com](mailto:gabrielslyric@msn.com).