



Welcome

Message: The Peril of Low Expectations
Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: God of The Incredible, we confess that we have too often let fear and cynicism lower our expectations, settling for safe, small prayers instead of trusting in Your limitless power. Forgive us for placing You, and the people around us, into boxes built out of past disappointments and familiar routines. Today, we drop our defensive armor, tear down the ceilings we have placed on Your grace, and ask You to do what only You can do in our homes, our church, and our community. Fill us with a bold, expectant faith that honors You, moves our hearts to action, and welcomes Your supernatural power back into our everyday lives. In the name of Him who exceeded every expectation. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: If you could guarantee that God would say "yes" to one bold prayer this week—no limits, no playing it safe—what would you ask Him for?

INTRODUCTION: The Gospel of Mark reaches a pivotal turning point in chapter 6, where the stark contrast between human cynicism and divine power is brought into sharp relief. In the opening verses, Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth, where the residents' familiarity and low expectations choke out the miraculous, leaving Jesus amazed by their unbelief. Yet, as the chapter unfolds through the sending out of the Twelve, the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, and Jesus walking on water, Mark reveals the incredible, explosive potential of great expectations. When people approach God with expectant, unreserved faith, the ceiling of human limitation is shattered—and ordinary disciples are empowered and we witness the unstoppable power of God.

BIBLE STUDY: Read Mark 6:5–6 (NKJV): Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **Identifying Our Defense Mechanisms:** We often lower our expectations to shield ourselves from pain, rejection, or disappointment. Where in your life (e.g., your marriage, parenting, career, or personal growth) have you noticed yourself setting the bar low just to keep from being disappointed?
3. **Overcoming the Trap of Familiarity:** In Mark 6:2–3, the people of Nazareth couldn't see Jesus' power because they felt they already knew everything about Him. How can "familiarity" show up in our spiritual lives or our relationships today? Have you ever put a family member, a fellow church member, or even God Himself into a box based on who they used to be?
4. **Evaluating Our Prayer Lives:** Mark 6:5 notes that Jesus "could do no mighty work there" because of their atmosphere of unbelief. Look at your personal prayer list from the past month: Are your prayers mostly focused on *managing/surviving* problems, or are you regularly bringing bold, "impossible" requests to God? What holds us back from asking God for big things?

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5. **Shifting from Cynicism to Expectancy:** In verse 6, Jesus was *marveled* (or amazed) by their unbelief. What is one practical step or area where you can intentionally drop the shield of cynicism this week and trade it for divine expectancy—whether at home, at work, in our church, or in our local community?

LIVE IT OUT: This week, stop praying to manage your problems and start praying bold prayers that require the power of God to answer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications. Remember to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)