

“His Unexpected Look”

Unexpected: Following Jesus #1

INTRODUCTION

God is not always predictable; in fact, He often does what we least expect. In our new series we look at some of the unexpected aspects of Jesus. Our first encounter with the unexpected is in Jesus’s look. He sees things differently than we do, until He changes us so that we see from His perspective, and through His eyes. In each of the three incidents in this study we unveil a little more about God’s unique perspective.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Have you ever been surprised to find that an actor is nothing like the person they portrayed in a film?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Insignificant or significant?

Q1. Read Luke 20:45- 21:4, 1 Samuel 16:7,

All of us have underlying assumptions that influence how we view others. In Luke 20, Jesus warns the people about the scribes who “devour widows’ houses”, and then commends the widow’s offering in Luke 21. What are some underlying assumptions the people might have held regarding the significance of scribes and of widows? What similar views do you think we hold today? What was it about the widow’s gift that made it significant in God’s sight? It is much easier for us to look at the outward appearance than it is to look at someone’s heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) What are some ways you can try to see beyond outward impressions and into someone’s heart?

Failure or success?

Q2. Read Luke 22:54-62; Isaiah 55:8-9

The failures we face in life, and how we respond to them, have a profound influence on us. In Luke 22, we see Peter failing to meet his own declaration of faith by denying Jesus three times. When the Lord gazed at Peter (Luke 22:61), Peter recognized that he had failed. Based on his reaction, how do you think Peter viewed himself at that point? In their next encounter, Jesus gives Peter three opportunities to declare his love, but he also gives Peter an assignment. What did he instruct Peter to do? Based on the nature of Jesus’s assignment how do you think He viewed Peter? Isaiah tells us God’s thoughts are higher than ours. (Isaiah 55:8-9) If you were to consider the greatest failing in your own life, would you say others encouraged you or discouraged you as a result? How was your view of yourself affected?

Read Isaiah 57:15-19; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

Sometimes we believe that God remains angry with us and views us as failures if we, or others hold that view. What does Isaiah 57:15-18 tell us is actually true of those who are contrite, crushed or discouraged? God does not want you sorrowful, but he does want to see the result of godly sorrow at work in your life. What does Paul tell us results from godly sorrow?

Sinner or saint?

Q3. Read Luke 19:1-9; 1 Timothy 1:14-16

Based on our “natural sight” Zacchaeus was an unlikely saint. As a tax collector he acquired his wealth by taking money from his fellow Jews to give to the Roman treasury. Viewed as greedy and harsh, tax collectors were hated by most. How did Zacchaeus respond when Jesus announced he must stay at his house? What does that reveal about the condition of Zacchaeus’ heart? In 1 Timothy 1:14-16 how did Paul describe himself (v. 16) when Christ’s grace and love were poured out on him? Can you identify someone in your life, like Paul or Zacchaeus, who needs God’s love and grace poured out on them? Remember to pray for them.

Wrap-Up

If we look only from our natural viewpoint, we see others far differently than Jesus does. Jesus looks at the heart, whereas we judge primarily on the outward appearance. He sees the success we can attain, but we tend to dwell on past failures. Perhaps most importantly of all, God looks beyond our weak and sinful humanity and sees the saint we can become through His power at work in us. And as we grow to be more like Him, our “look” can change from the natural to the unexpected.

Memory Verse

... *For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.* 1 Samuel 16:7b *ESV*

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more notes) _____

Challenge: Is there someone in your life whose past failures continue to cause them discouragement? Ask God to give you a glimpse of the future He sees for them, and ask Him to use you to be an encouragement.

Q1

Luke 20:45-47 ESV - 45 And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, 47 who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." Luke 21:1-4 ESV - 1 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, 2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

1 Samuel 16:7 ESV - 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Q2

Luke 22:54-62 ESV - 54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. 56 Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." 58 And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." 59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV - 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 57:15-19 NET - 15 For this is what the high and exalted one says, the one who rules forever, whose name is holy: "I dwell in an exalted and holy place, but also with the discouraged and humiliated, in order to cheer up the humiliated and to encourage the discouraged. 16 For I will not be hostile forever or perpetually angry, for then man's spirit would grow faint before me, the life-giving breath I created. 17 I was angry because of their sinful greed; I attacked them and angrily rejected them, yet they remained disobedient and stubborn. 18 I have seen their behavior, but I will heal them and give them

rest, and I will once again console those who mourn. 19 I am the one who gives them reason to celebrate. Complete prosperity is available both to those who are far away and those who are nearby," says the LORD, "and I will heal them.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 NIV - 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Q3

Luke 19:1-9 NIV - 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

1 Timothy 1:14-16 NIV - 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Prayer Notes cont.
