

By: Rev. Mark Breese

Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.

Expect The Unexpected

The old adage “Expect the unexpected” can come in many forms. One form that it came in for me back in high school, was an older gentleman (well older to a teenager) who was the super-fan for our cross country team. Let’s call him Mr. B.

He was always there urging and cheering us on. And when he cheered he meant it! Mr. B. had this growly, forceful and loud voice. You couldn’t miss it, and you never knew when it would come.

When you run cross country, the course was not around a track, but 3 miles, up hills and down hills, and generally through parks that were at least partially wooded. You would turn some corner, all focused, finding your pace so that you could finish as strong as you could.

Then, like happened at every race, suddenly Mr. B.’s voice would ring out just close by, “Come on Breese! Let’s go! Let’s go! Get moving! Push it!” Since it happened every race, you might think it was expected, and it was, but it still surprised you every time. Sometimes it startled you! Even though it was expected, it always seemed to come when you didn’t expect it.

In the story of Abraham and Sarah something unexpected happens. They offered hospitality to some unexpected travelers. While they were eating, the travelers gave *them* some unexpected, surprising and improbable news. Sarah, they said, was going to have a son. When Sarah heard this she laughed because she was well past the age where she would be able to have children. Then she and Abraham got another unexpected piece of news.

You see, many years before, God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation, God’s chosen people. The only trouble was that he and

Genesis 18:1-14

Sarah and Abraham Offer Hospitality to the Visitors



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Sarah were never able to have children. In order to see God's promise fulfilled, they even went so far as to have Abraham take a concubine, Hagar, so they would have a child, Ishmael. Now that they were old, it seemed that was the way that God's promise would be fulfilled.

Yet suddenly, in an unexpected way, they get this improbable news (because of their age) that the promise will be fulfilled exactly as God promised. Then, even more improbably, they learn that these visitors were actually divine visitors! (verses 13&14)

The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

Nothing is too wonderful, too amazing, too impossible for God to accomplish. Our expectations of how things ought to go, our limited human perspective, can never limit God. When it comes to God's blessings, we should expect the unexpected.

No matter what the times we live in may be like, no matter how good or bad, predictable or chaotic, God is bound by none of that. Blessings are always there. They may not be as flashy as the news Sarah received, but they are there for us nonetheless. God is always active in our lives—always with us, always caring for us, always loving us. It is an expectation we can count on, even if it comes in surprising and unexpected ways.



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