



EXPECTING FAITHFULNESS

Psalm 146:5-10; Isaiah 35:1-10; Matt 11:2-11; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10

GETTING STARTED

What is your favorite Christmas TV Special or movie? Why?

Think about the people you will spend Christmas with this year. What are the various expectations that will be “in play” during your gatherings?

READ AND REFLECT

Read the Isaiah, Matthew, and James lectionary passages listed above.

- List/share the common themes you recognize in these passages:

Read John the Baptist’s question aloud (Matt 2:3). Does this question seem strange for John to ask of Jesus? What are the possible reasons for his question?

How does Mary’s song (Luke 1:46b-55) fit into the “expectations” of the passages you have already read?

What is the value of prophets to us today (James 5:10)? (Remember to see John the Baptist and Mary as prophets to us as well.)

ENGAGE AND DISCUSS

When you find yourself in a closer place with God—when you are *walking with God* more intentionally—do you have a different set of expectations of God than when you feel *far from God*?

How is this good?

Is there a danger in shifting expectations?

How would you summarize Jesus' words when he answers John's question in Matt 2:3? How does this connect to faithfulness regardless of circumstances or outcomes?

How do the people in the lectionary passages live with an "expecting" faithfulness?

Where is God expecting your faithfulness in your life right now? Where do you need to hear Jesus' words in your own life—helping you live with an "expecting" faithfulness?

NEXT STEPS

List the areas in this season of life where you are finding yourself with great expectations?

How is calling you to faithfulness in these areas?

How is God calling you to respond to this week's Bible passages, study, and discussions this week?