

THE BIG IDEA: God's faithfulness is reflected in the unexpected.

The Take-Off

Today's word in our UN series (which is really not a series, at all) is unexpected, and something happened 16 years ago today that is the perfect illustration of what unexpected looks like.

Will and Parker showed up on the scene a whopping 7 weeks early!

If I can, let me just use that time in our life to help all of us see how God works in our lives in the unexpected times. There are 3 things - we'll call them stages - that happen in relation to the unexpected.

1. We **PREPARE** before the unexpected

- a. Anybody want to guess what Wendy and I were doing in the 33 weeks leading up to the surprise visit and subsequent drive in labor to the hospital?
- b. We were painting furniture, putting together cribs and generally trying to get our things in order for their arrival.
- c. We were praying every night for them by name while I laid hands on them - even Parker's butt!
- d. It is this preparation before the unexpected that show our faithfulness to God.
- e. How irresponsible would we be if we were just sitting around acting like we never expected them to come out?
- f. If you're an investor, you've heard the disclaimer that "past performance isn't indicative of future results"
- g. But with God, it is. Faithfulness now does equal being prepared then.
- h. It's what gave David confidence when an unexpected giant picked a fight. (1 Samuel 17:34-37)
- i. Having faithfully kept his dad's sheep allowed him to win some fights with God's help.
- j. The size of the next enemy was unexpected for sure, but David had prepared as a faithful servant.
- k. We need to, as well. Here are 2 verses that encourage us to:
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 - study to show yourself approved
 - Luke 6:45 - we store good in us so that good can come out of us
- l. One last thought and we'll move on: we can't prepare FOR the unexpected (after all, it's unexpected!); we prepare BEFORE the unexpected by living faithfully for God
- m. Preparation is less about memorizing steps to take and more about faithfully keeping in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)
- n. Before the bear, the lion and the giant, David faithfully kept his father's flock

2. We **DECLARE** during the unexpected

- a. We've already mentioned the confidence that being personally prepared gave David, but let's read it
- b. We see it in the first time the giant and David spoke. (1 Samuel 17:41-47)
- c. What David said back to Goliath is what could be called a "Declaration"
- d. We need to take a few minutes here and explain what we mean by declaration because it's become quite the buzzword among Christians lately
- e. The origin of it is Latin and it means "to make clear"
- f. Like the Declaration of Independence and the way we declare our love for someone
- g. David doesn't know the details of how all this will go down with Goliath, but he makes it clear to the giant that God is giving him victory
- h. One more distinction, and this one's critical.
- i. I've been on the fence for some time about this declaration thing simply because believers declare the wrong things all the time and I don't want to add to that.
- j. I've got 2 videos that illustrate perfectly what declarations aren't. Let's roll them and then we'll take a look at some declarations that I've provided for you.
- k. Declarations biblically aren't about your ability or what you wish was your ability
- l. They are simply about Jesus and what He has done for us.
- m. The best time to say them? When everything we know is shaken and we're in the middle of the unexpected.
- n. You know why they're so important? Because we will all be in situations that challenge what we know, and these are like anchors that hold us in those times.
- o. We prepare in faithfulness to God before the unexpected, and we declare our faith in God during the unexpected. Then, when it's over.....

3. We SHARE after the unexpected

- a. We get to tell stories!
- b. In our story here in 1 Samuel, David didn't even have to tell the story because he had his own theme song!
- c. Everywhere he went, people were sharing what God was doing through him.
- d. And here's the thing that we'll find ourselves sharing.
- e. Not how awesome we were or how great we fought. Nope, we'll share about God's faithfulness to us.
- f. You see, in an unexpected twist, it's the unexpected that ensures God gets the glory, because even though we prepare ourselves in faithfulness, the situations quickly reveal that we have no shot except for God's faithfulness.
- g. You and I suddenly realize that we had very little to do with it, and that's when we understand the power behind today's Big Idea - **God's faithfulness is reflected in the unexpected.**

The Landing

Back to the afternoon hours 16 years ago today.

We were as prepared as we knew how to be for 2 boys, but their premature birth was totally unexpected.

We didn't expect to stay in the hospital with tiny babies, and definitely didn't expect to take Parker home on day 11 without Will who came home 5 days later.

This was an unexpected situation that revealed all the reasons why we declared our faith in God and not ourselves, and now, 16 years removed from it with 2 amazing young men, we get to share about God's faithfulness to us because everything about that situation broke us of confidence in who we are.

But every time we share about it, we - and those who hear it - see God's faithfulness in it.

We don't seek hard times, but when we have personally prepared a foundation of faithfulness to God, we never have to worry about God's faithfulness to bring us through them.

Isaiah 43:2 is true.

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