

THE EARNEST EXPECTATION OF SONSHIP

Jonathon Wills, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 09 August 2026

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Good morning, everyone. We have just sung, '...with the earnest expectation of our sonship', and our confession is 'By your power, Lord, you have given us (you have given me) all things for life and godliness.' Who believed that as they sang it? Teenagers specifically, did you believe that when you sang that? Did you believe that that is the expectation of your sonship, that you know today, that God by His power (His mighty power; the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God), has given you everything that you need for life and godliness? More than that – 'by His precious and magnificent promises we know Him.' There is a knowing that is yours to possess today. 'We know You and (even further...) we are growing each day in Your life' - life that we are born of.

We then sang, 'Morning by morning, He awakens my ear.' That was not morning by morning - perhaps; maybe; if everything lines up - maybe He might say something to me. The confession and the expectation that we carry as a son of God is that morning by morning, my confession is that as I wait upon Him, the Lord God opens my ear to hear as a learning disciple. It is the expectation of a learning disciple to hear from the Lord - to receive His command. The confession further is that His commands are not burdensome for me; but rather, what I am waiting for and longing for is actually to hear them. That is because to hear them is to know Him, and to know Him is to know myself, and my obedience for today.

It is not a matter of you teenagers then thinking, 'There is such a weight of expectation on me. God's word keeps coming, and Mum and Dad keep talking to me, and I cannot keep up with their expectations of me.' My encouragement to you is that you would carry the earnest expectation of your *own* sonship and that *you* are the one who is expecting to hear from God each day. You are then acknowledging that part of how you are going to hear from Him is that Mum and Dad

are going to speak to you as those who are submitted to the headship of Christ. They will speak as those who are under authority and now carry the authority of their own name to minister in their obedience to you. This is so you would know the authority of your sonship. Your testimony would then be, 'As He opens my ear, I am hearing from Him, and He is also giving me the tongue of a disciple so that I am able to articulate to others what it is that I am hearing from Him. It is my delight as a son of God to share with others the generous and rich promises that the Lord is speaking to me about.' Such is the tongue that is given.

Teens, who is it that carries the expectation of you living as a son of God? It is *yours*. It is yours to possess. I had this written further in my notes. Did we not love the expression of the songs yesterday? Sorry to those who were not here to hear the songs, but you have the recordings. Listen to them to hear the testimony of the young men and women who carried that. I was so blessed by Eliza's ministry there and her confession was (as a 13, 14-year-old girl), 'I am responding in this second-time season.' I found that remarkable that a young teenage girl is hearing what we are hearing in relationship to a second time. It is particularly applying to us as parents and those that have been around for 50 years. A 13-year-old is able to acknowledge that the Lord is coming in the season of a second time: 'His word has come to me... I am responding in this second time. You are calling me and this time it is my choice; this time it is my faith. The faith of Christ is given to me, and it is mine; and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of Jesus Christ.'

That is the promise of the faith that belongs to the New Covenant. It is the faith of Christ that is mine to possess; it is His life that I am now living. I was so encouraged to hear a response in this second-time season as the Lord is speaking to us. That response of a young lady - it burned. It was alive with the

fire of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, and it burned brightly in its expression of both testimony and then song - a song that we were able to join. We then also sang, 'I am responding in this second time. I know Lord, you are calling to me; not to my parents; not to my grandparents; not just to the presbytery; but to me. You are calling me, and this time it is my choice, and I am making the choice, and the choice is to live by faith - by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.'

In relation to this earnest expectation, could we say that this is how Adam and the woman approached the tree of life each day before the Fall? Do you think they were uncertain as to whether perhaps the Lord God would be there or not? Then, when they arrived, whether He would actually speak and minister to them? They looked forward to meeting the Lord God at the tree of life and the expectation to receive from Him the capacity to be fruitful in their works.

Jude spoke in relation to what I would call this 'looking forward with longing or earnest expectation' when he said in Jude verse 20. 'But you, beloved... [The context of the 'but' is the manner in which others are living their life. Their reference point is not the cross; is not Christ's sure and steadfast anchor for their soul; they are given to all kind of worldly lusts and pleasures.] ... But you, beloved, building yourself up in your most holy faith [Whose is it? It is yours and you are building yourself up], praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God [and here is that 'looking forward'], looking for... [This would be *Jona's Expository Dictionary* definition for 'looking for': '...an awaiting to welcome and to receive with the certain expectation of arrival.' I will say that again because I thought that was good. 'Looking for: awaiting to welcome and to receive.' So here I am at the door, ready to welcome and to receive with the certain expectation of arrival. I am looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ all the way unto eternal life with the certain expectation of its arrival for me each day, as my ear is

being opened morning by morning. It is by mercies that are new each morning that I am then able to present myself all the way unto eternal life. What are we looking for? What are we looking for each day? The certainty of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Part of that is then the acknowledgement that the judgement of God is toward me and that I am in need of mercy each day.

Adam and the woman would have come to the tree of life to know Him, and they then went out with joy and were led forth with grace and peace having received the full provision of having eaten at the tree of life. That is, they found fellowship with the Lord God. Josh exhorted the teens yesterday that we were made for fellowship with the Lord. He gave to us a body, soul and spirit so that within this body, and in the expression of the soul and the spirit that carries our identity, we would know fellowship with the Lord God and then with one another.

I do not get the picture of the tree of life as they would depict it sometimes as an apple tree, and that the fruit of the tree of life is an apple that we munch on. I see it more like the burning bush - the fire and the light of Yahweh's glorious presence that we are invited to join and to be a part of. The tree of life shines as light in the heights of Zion. It is where Christ is walking in the midst of lampstand churches through seven stars in His right hand. I want you to catch the fire, the glory, the activity of the presence and fellowship of the Lord God at the tree of life and where it is that that fire is alive and is burning. It is among lampstand churches where Christ is walking with seven stars in His right hand.

John saw this fellowship of light in every house that had been built and established in Zion as he beheld the Father and His administration in Revelation chapter 4 verse 5. It says, 'Before the throne of the Father, seven lamps of fire were blazing... [This is the fellowship of light in every home that belongs to the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, atop the heights of Mount Zion. This is the light that is in every one of our

homes. It is alive within us because of the anointing that the Holy Spirit is bringing to us - the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God.] ...Seven lamps of fire blazing before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.' This is not just a physical structure somewhere or a denomination. This is the fellowship of light in every home.

As I have heard His word being declared among us, I am hearing the Lord declaring to us, 'Let there be light.' Let there be light in the spirit of every teenager; in the spirit of every parent; in the fellowship of every home, so that the light of the fellowship of the glory of God that is in the face of Jesus Christ would shine upon us as we believe. John saw one lampstand with its seven lamps. There is the transition from seven lampstands that are blazing before the throne of the Son that are now one lampstand established before the throne of the Father.

Our participation in this ought to do something for you. I am not trying to work you up into some hyper-spiritual state or anything like that. But the word of the Lord ought to do something within us because it is our longing. I long to hear from Him. Then when He is defining for me, not only how I am living now, but what is to come, and then further to that, the guarantee of the fulfillment of the adoption on the day of resurrection (when everything that is corruptible and mortal puts off its corruption and mortality and puts on... [because of the substance of Christ that is already alive within us] ... puts on Christ's incorruptibility and His immortality, and we are raised in His likeness - in the image and likeness of God on that day), it changes the way that I live today. It changes the way that I hear right now, and it causes me to be earnest - to hear from Him and to participate. I can know that the Holy Spirit is strengthening me with the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. What does that look like? What does that sound like? Bruce exhorted us, 'What manner of people should we be?' We are sons of God; we are households of the covenant; we sing and we

testify of these things; but 'what manner of people should we be?'

There has been some really helpful definition for the teenagers in terms of what that practically looks like in your relationships as brother and sister together. This is the front line of the ministry of the word to you. I know that there are a lot of things taking place at school. The Lord is ministering a capacity to you at school. But the front line of it is in covenant homes. That is the corruption that the Lord is dealing with. The world is full of corruption, but He is speaking to the corruption and the uncleanness that is within our homes; that is within the relationship between two sisters and two brothers and a brother and a sister; then that relationship toward Mum and Dad. He is doing that because He is speaking about the relationship in the marriage as well; then the three generations of the household. He is earnest in His expression toward us, desiring that we would be earnest in our turning in repentance and our possessing of the faith.

Again, we said, 'By your power, You have given us all things for life and godliness.' A question could then be, what are all these things that He has given me? That would be a good question to talk about in your home. What are the precious and magnificent promises? It is certainly to be born of God and to become a temple of the Holy Spirit and to receive the anointing of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. These are good things to talk about and to know.

The expression that we see that is blazing before the throne of the Father is not a subdued expression. Do you know what I mean? How are you feeling today? 'Oh, the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord is... It is upon me.' 'What is He saying to you?' 'Jesus?' It is not subdued. 'I *know* in whom I have believed and I am *certain*.' It is vibrant; it is unhindered; it is alive; it is willing; it is voluntary; it is full of authority and the assurance of faith, and it is filled with expectation. 'Let the fire burn. Hallelujah. Let the fire burn!'

It is not about an intensity in pressing in. There ought to be an ease about things. The word is ministering rest to us. It was spoken that there is faith to relax a little bit - not to be complacent, but to be easy in your response and the expression of who you are and to continue to grow in our appreciation and our love of one another.

The Scriptures promise us (and John rejoices in this) that 'what is born of God overcomes the world.' Why? Because Christ has overcome the world and we are born of His life. Those who are born of God are joined to the overcoming of Christ (the Author and the Finisher of our faith) and we overcome the world. We already know how things end. The victory that has overcome the world is our faith. It is a faith that comes from hearing the word, and as we hear, we receive faith as a gift such that we believe that God will do what He has promised. I do not need to hear any other alternative other than what He has promised to me.

While we do not yet possess the fullness of what God has promised, faith is substantial within us, and we rejoice to journey each day by faith and not by sight. We are not just living with faith *in* Jesus; we live by the faith *of* Jesus. That is how Paul testified in Galatians. 'I live by the faith *of* the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.' [Galatians 2 verse 20] When His faith is substantial in us, we carry a certain expectation and confidence in life because it is not just about what I will receive, it is who I am and the things that belong to the accountable presentation of myself. I am receiving the grace of resurrection life through Christ's offering by the Holy Spirit, and I live by this power. I will say that again: I am receiving the grace of His resurrection life through Christ's offering by the Holy Spirit, and I live by this power.

Romans chapter 8 is a chapter that I really love and cherish and love to come back to. Paul says in verse 19: 'The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.' Creation's expectation is earnest and it is certain. The

creation itself knows what is to come. Creation itself is waiting, groaning with birth pangs, for the time when the Father will take His seat among us. He will glorify us as His sons, and we will glorify Him. His kingdom will fill the earth. Creation eagerly waits for this. Isaiah then speaks in Isaiah 55 verse 12, about the demeanour and the culture of the sons whom creation is earnestly waiting to see revealed. This is the descriptor of us. This is the descriptor of these lamps of fire blazing before the throne: 'For you shall go out with joy and be led out with peace; and the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.' It is the most beautiful expression, describing the natural created world rejoicing as sons of God do not live passively, but go out each day with joy and are led out with peace.

Teens, you are going to school tomorrow and I have a pretty good idea how most of you feel about going back to school. Who is looking forward to it with an eager anticipation that these are the works and the context that have been prepared for you?

I want you to know that we understand the weight and the burden in that worldly context that you go into. It is nothing like the securing of this context today. But the full provision of God is available to you. You are a son of God and 'what is born of God overcomes the world'. It does not mean that you are going to go there and you are going to dominate; and you are going to be the most popular person in class; and you are going to get everything right and come home and say, 'I overcame the world today because everybody liked me and everybody gathered to me.' Some of you will find it quite an alone place. Yet you need to know and carry the assurance of faith together with you regardless of whether people like you, or whether people do not like you; whether you find the work difficult, or whether you find the work easy; whether or not you are surrounded by friends; or whether there is pressure or whether there is not pressure.

However it would be, you can carry the 'certain expectation' that God is with you. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has anointed you with the power of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord in exactly the same way that He anointed Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane before He then proceeded through seven sprinklings of His blood to establish a pathway for us to participate in each day.

Come with me to Philippians chapter 3. Paul says here in verse 7, 'But what things were gain to me, these things I counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in Him... [You are 'found in Him', but there is a treasure to gaining and knowing that 'foundedness' - that foundation in Christ each day.] ... that I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the Law, but that which is through [can we say?] the faith of Christ. [It is not just my faith in Him] but that which is through the faith of Christ], the righteousness which is from God by faith [the righteousness which is the faith of God]; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection... [to immortality and incorruption] ... that I may know Him and the power [that raised Christ from the dead - above everything that is corruptible and everything that is mortal] ...that I might know Him and that power, [that that power might come out from Him as the immortal Head, and minister to me today as I go to school. In what context?] ... in the fellowship of His sufferings. [That is what we are joined to and participate in] ...conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead... [That attaining is the resurrection life that is coming out from His immortality to me in my mortality. The same Spirit and power that raised Christ up from the dead is raising me up together with Him (from the fellowship of His death and from the fellowship of His suffering), that I might live by that same Spirit and power. I love how

Paul says] ...if by any means. [If by any means... Those means are not my own intense struggle and effort to do what I think is right or what I think somebody else is expecting of me. 'Each day I feel pressed down more and more and more by the weight of expectations of living as a son of God. But I do not know how to live as a son of God. Maybe that is because I do not even want to live as a son of God.' Such is the weight that sits there sometimes. Paul is saying] ...if by any means I might attain... [to this resurrection life and power that is coming out from Christ to me. What are those 'means'? The means are the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. The means are the anointing of the Holy Spirit of whom you are a temple. The Holy Spirit dwells within you and He anoints you with the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God. By those means] ... I am able to attain to the resurrection life.' I want to stir you teenagers, to know Him and the power of His resurrection. Let that begin to burn within you, to 'know Him and the power of His resurrection'.

We were talking at our devotion table yesterday. Kyle had spoken to us about the reference point in our life; what the true reference point is; how we deviate from that, and other things in life become reference points for us. We talked about all those and then we said, 'But what and who is the reference point?' We had a couple of good answers. Then, I did need to say, 'How about we name Him? Jesus.' Jesus is our reference point. He is the steadfast Anchor of our soul. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He is the Pioneer and the Captain of our salvation. He is the resurrection and the life. He is God Almighty. We could keep going... '...That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection' - *that* resurrection. When I understand that, I understand the necessity for my submission to Christ the immortal Head of His body and the necessary... (as Richie wrote it in his article) ...the necessary chain of command through which the grace of life is ministered to everyone.

Let us come to Romans chapter 12. Paul picks up what I will call his 'burden for teenage sons of God'. His burden was that teenage sons of God would learn what is reasonably expected of them and what they should reasonably expect of themselves. This is Romans chapter 12 and verse 1. Can I say that Paul is saying this to the teenagers in the church in Rome? 'I beseech you [which is I urge you] therefore, my brethren [young teenagers], by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.' He is encouraging them (and he is encouraging us) that it is your body (It has been given to you), it is your spirit and soul. It has been given to you to possess and to know and to worship in.

This is the context of Paul's cry: 'That *I* may know Him' - not that somebody else would, but that *I* would. Again, it is the expression of Eliza's song. 'This time it is *my* choice, this time it is *my* faith', because I know 'He is calling me'. I am the one who looks to wake at a particular time in the morning and to order myself because I carry the earnest longing within myself to hear from the Lord and to wait upon Him.

There is a necessary instruction within every covenant house in terms of how it is that a child (and then a teenager) should approach that time of devotion before the Lord. As we become older, and as we proceed into new and maturing seasons of life, the reasonable expectation of it is now yours. Mum and Dad will continue to lead you in it and will continue to exemplify the culture, but it becomes yours. That is what I want you to know today: it is yours. It is yours to possess. He is yours to know personally. He is yours to meet with each day.

Adam and the woman (before she was Eve) forsook the provision of the Lord God each day at the tree of life. We know that they did; they forsook that, because one day Satan deceived Eve by telling her that the Father acted independently of the Son and the Holy Spirit and that, by implication, she could as well. She could be the source of her own life.

When Eve believed Satan's lie, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, suddenly looked different. Instead of carrying the certain expectation of death because of what the Lord God had said, it now held for her an expectation of life. This is where we now have two different contexts for expectation: There is the earnest expectation of a son of God who is meeting the Lord God at the tree of life each day; then there is the expectation that is born of fallen desire - the other law and the infirmity within our flesh. Suddenly, what carried the certain expectation of death now looked good for food, pleasant to the eyes and desirable to make her wise.

With this new expectancy, she did not just keep it to herself. She sought then to give it to her husband Adam and they ate together. Having been deceived into believing that they now had the power to fulfil their own desires in life, the deadly pursuit for life apart from the Lord God began. It is a deadly pursuit to pursue fallen desire and then an alternate expectation each day in life. The promise of having whatever you want in life only gave them nakedness, fear, shame, disappointment, and the desperate attempt to cover up and to hide. If their life remained apart from the fellowship of the Lord God, they would never be satisfied. It did not matter how successful they would have been. Cain became a great success - a builder of cities, and father and grandfather and multiple times over. In many ways you could say in a worldly sense he became a great success. But the man found no true satisfaction in life and his end was death.

There are two contexts of expectation: one that is passing and one that is established forever. Proverbs says that the expectation of the righteous son of God who lives by the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God, is eternal and it will not be cut off. [Proverbs 28 verse 18]. If you continue to believe, it will not and cannot be cut off. The only way that it can, and the only power that Satan then finds is when you do not believe. The alternate that is driven by fallen desire and

is passing away only leaves people disappointed, discouraged, ashamed, afraid and even depressed.

If you are not looking to Christ and embracing the hope that is set before you with the earnest expectation of your sonship, then expectation can sit very heavily upon you. This may be the weight of the expectations of others upon you.

Expectation of others is not always a bad thing. When I ask my children to empty the dishwasher, I do carry an expectation that the dishwasher will be emptied. That is not unreasonable and heavy-handed. That is the fellowship in a home. It is what ought to be reasonably expected. In fact, what we desire is that we do not even need to ask for the dishwasher to be emptied. Rather, it is seen that it needs to be done and there is a desire to offer and to participate in the home. There is no need to resent being asked to do what you know is yours to do and you should have already done. Let us get clear there.

However, some expectation sits heavily, and it may be real or perceived. If you are not embracing your sanctification, this will weigh you down. Some will try to meet it and wear themselves out trying. Others will give up quickly saying, 'What is the point? I will never measure up anyway. So, I will not even try.' There are the two extremes that sit there, and everyone sits somewhere in between the two of them. 'I will never measure up anyway.' Some teenagers resent their parents, because they think they can never meet their parents' expectations.

In some contexts, that is very true because the nature of the expectation that the parent is carrying is most unsanctified. They themselves are not submitted to the authority of Christ's headship and so they carry no authority within themselves to secure their son or their daughter. Instead, they expect that their child will present in a particular way, and they provoke the child to shame. The context of that shame is that the child ends up loving the darkness more than the light, largely because the culture of light is not in the home and it is not being taught.

Therefore, there is always a hiding away and a covering up and a thinking. 'I cannot come forward into the light often, because I do not see it exemplified by Mum and Dad.' No wonder the Lord is examining our homes.

There can also be the weight of your own expectations upon yourself that are not grounded in truth. Then, there are the vain expectations of life. The weight of these can cause anxiety, sleeplessness, depression, agitation, and even illness. These things expose that the basis of the weighty expectation is the other law at work within us, and it is not the fruit that comes from eating at the tree of life.

There is a difference (Zach and I have shared a precious season in terms of walking this through together) between a parent having expectations based on what seems right to them or being burdened for the child's sanctification. As I said, any parenting that is not towards sanctification will cause the child to be ashamed. Parents ought to be burdened for the sanctification of their children.

We should be seeking the Lord diligently to know Him. This means that I, as a parent am seeking the Lord diligently that I may know Him. In the light of this knowledge, I desire to know myself and to know myself as a man who is under authority, and to know that there be a witness among my brethren that I am a man under authority. That was the confession of the centurion. (I am connecting a little bit to Richie's article now.) The principle of headship is that the authority of a person's name is revealed by the offering of another. My waiting upon the Lord to know Him, to be known by Him, and to know myself and to submit to His authority as my Head is that I might then carry the authority of my name and sonship within my home. I am a man under authority, but equally I am a man that is given authority in the home together with my wife and with my children.

When that authority is exercised in a sanctified manner, the fruit will be grace and peace to all who are in the house. It will not be this wrestle in terms of an unreasonable

expectation. It will be the son and the daughter understanding the love of their mother and father for them, and that they will not relent in relationship to the burden for that one's sanctification, so that the young person would choose and confess, 'He is calling me and I am now responding to the call.' We can then proceed forward in fellowship together.

Why is this so important? Because Jesus testified in this manner. He said, 'I am a man under authority. I do not speak my own words. I speak what the Father commands Me to speak.' [John 12 verse 49]. He is submitted to the authority of the Father and as He does, He knows the works of His own obedience which is one of authority. That authority is then extended toward us.

The whole principle is that we are not just telling our children what to do (I am speaking now to the parents), but we are teaching them who they are in Christ. A parent carries the burden for the child's sanctification, and just like Christ, we embrace and we endure the cross for the joy that is set before us. The joy that is set before us is seeing our children brought forth from one degree of glory into another each day, in the glorious image and likeness of God. That becomes the priority of our parenting - not behavioural management or not meeting particular standards - but the burden toward their sanctification.

Parents should be teaching their children to be burdened for their own sanctification and to live with the expectancy that God will do for them what He has promised. Part of this training will be areas of age-appropriate responsibility; self-care; self-regulation; household chores; personal and family devotion; your practice on your instruments; doing your best at school, and the list goes on. It is practical. It is a practical work.

It should also include training toward what to expect from life and how to deal with life's pressures and life's disappointments. The disappointments are that we do not always get what we want; we are not always treated the way that we would like to be treated.

Children are learning how to wait upon the Lord because their expectation is from Him - not just because it is the demand of Mum and Dad. That expectation of the one who is born of God becomes the possession of the child and the teenager. They are learning how to discern the difference between waiting with that expectation and pressing to lay hold of the desires of their heart. Wherever we see the agitations and frustrations and emotions, we know that it is a pressing for the desire of our heart. Wherever it is at rest and it is peace, then we know that there is a waiting with earnest expectation of our sonship. Through this training, children will learn to devote themselves to the Lord as they choose to believe and to lay hold of the hope that is set before *them*. Kids, it is set before *you*. Because of the certainty of this hope, they will earnestly seek the Lord and His righteousness that He might add to them according to His mercies.

Let us be encouraged that there is nothing better in life than to be a son of God. Teens, can you respond to me there? There is nothing better in life than to be a son of God. 'Amen!' Mum and Dad can give the heartiest 'hello' and 'amen', but it is yours to bear witness to. Can you bear witness together with me today the earnest expectation of our sonship? Let us look forward to what comes today and tomorrow and, in the season ahead.