



Links Players

'WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING?'

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation. (Psalm 5:3, NIV)

MORE THAN ONCE IN THIS SPACE, we have written of expectations. From the first day you pick up a golf club, you have to know what to do with them. Many walk away from their initial experience at the game, saying, "Sorry, not for me. Too frustrating." Most will give it more time and learn to accept the struggles with the pleasures—that is, to manage their expectations.

I should probably expect less from my game than I do. I'm older. Cancer has taken its shots at me. I hardly ever practice. But in my mind I can remember when I scored better than I do now with clubs made of wood and balls soft as cheese.

In a way, remembering better of our past or foreseeing better in our future is like looking to God to meet our expectations. After all, he can do what we cannot. In every regard. At every critical moment. Jesus said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

There are two ways to read our verse today. The first is with caution; the second is with faith.

I know caution. I'm very good at it. Been practicing for years. Ever since I hit that persimmon driver. You didn't dare swing too hard, lest you miss the center of the clubface. Do that, and you'd be happy to see the ball go 180 off the tee. Do that, and you just might have to look down on an ugly mark along the top line of the face for the next long while. Caution tells me, "Hedge your prayers. You don't want to deal with the disappointment if God doesn't come through. Whisper what you want, then back away quietly. If he doesn't notice you were in the room, it's just like it never happened."

David, our psalmist, was so unlike this. He was the warrior-king. In the Valley of Elah, in sling's range of an undefeated giant, he had learned that God makes big things happen. So David prayed without caution. He said, "Here you go, Lord. Can't wait to see what you do with this." Then he waited. In expectation. Sure that God would do something.

What were you expecting when you prayed this morning? I hope it was something impossible. Impossible for you. Not for God.

Opening questions Are your golf expectations too high or too low in general? Have you ever considered how you might set these at a realistic level?

READING Psalm 5:1-3; Matthew 19:23-26

Vibrant prayers (Psalm 5)

What are some aspects that define David's prayers? Do these define your own prayers? What changes might you need to make in your approach to God in prayer?

The God of the impossible (Matthew 19)

What was the context into which Jesus said that all things are possible with God? Would you say that your expectations for what happens in a material sense are similar or different to your expectations for what can happen in a spiritual sense?

What are some "impossible" things you would give to God in prayer if you were not afraid he wouldn't answer? How can you be encouraged to pray with faith?
