*Introduction:* Pg. \_\_\_\_

Meditation on **New Year. New Day**.

What we’re seeing…

* New People: Attendance through the Fall on Sundays - Highest ever. Attendance in Groups - Highest ever.
* New Life: People stepping into the life of Christ
* New Provision (New Space - Ripple Project)
* New Commitment to one another (sharing weakness, encouraging one another when we see we’re off track - that takes courage, providing for one another)
* New Leaders taking responsibility (Directors for Connections Team, Venue Team & a new interim Director for our Redemption Kids!)
* Most of all, I’m loving the New Culture of Prayer God is building…

Yesterday… New Year. New \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (New joys. New surprises. New boldness. New Mercy. New Opportunities to love and serve God.

I want to add one to that…

**“New Year. New Expectations.”**

**1 John 5:6-12**

I am praying this greatest year of journeying with Jesus that you have ever experienced.

I hope you want that, expect that, and are going after that! I’m all in with you. I want it for me and I want it for you.

Why should we not pray for that? Why should we not expect that?

High Expectations don’t just happen. They are built on something strong, something sure… We are not just hashtagging… #bestyearever #lookout2018, #2018youdontwantnone - alright, I didn’t see that last one - that’s what I’m saying though. ). There substance to our hope, is there substance to our belief, is there substance to our expectation?

Our expectation is in Christ!

If Christ is in you, and you hear me say those words, there should be an explosion of faith and expectation because of all that is true of him.

How can be sure all of this is true about Jesus? That’s what John is addresses in the closing chapter of his first letter.

I am praying what see in God’s Word this morning about JESUS (it’s all about him) ignites this kind of expectation or fuels the fire that is already going in your soul, because of who he is.

**The Point: Allow the truth of Jesus to ignite new expectations in you.**

*Read 5:6-12*

**I. New expectations rise because of God’s testimony about Jesus (5:6-9)**

Our expectations are build on the strength of the evidence concerning Jesus, that he is the Son of God (the pronoun “he” in verse 6 points us back to *v. 5*). Let me tell you why it’s so strong.

THE STRENGTH OF THIS TESTIMONY

If I can summarize this, John is saying Jesus came in power. Like NEON lights flashing to grab people’s attention, there were moments where his divinity was flashing for all to see This is is certainly true in the examples he calls forth in *verse 6.*

A testimony is more credible when there are multiple sources that corroborate evidence:

* Water & Blood (Possibilities)
  + Some say it point us to the ordinances Jesus gave us of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (But how did Jesus come in those. He gave those but didn’t come in those)
  + Some say it only points us to the cross: where blood and water flowed from Jesus when the Roman Centurion pierced his side.
  + But the most probable and plausible explanation is that it point us to both the Baptism of Jesus and the Crucifixion of Jesus.
  + Wording… water and blood; not by water only, but by the water and blood (seems to point to two significant events)
  + Came… revealing who he was in these two events. One that launched his ministry. One that fulfilled the mission of his ministry. The Water and the Blood.
* The Water:
  + **“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”** **(Mark 1:9-11)**
  + The Spirit descending: empowering Jesus for all he was to accomplish.
  + The Father saying: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” echoing - Psalm 2 (who caught that Psalm 2 in our Bible Reading plan - love our approach) & Isaiah 42:1 (like Jesus, because Jesus is in us, God is pleased with us, so we work from approval not for approval).
* The Blood:
  + The blood points us to the testimony of the cross.
  + What happened there? Real death. Real person. Real God. Where Jesus accomplished our Real Reconciliation to back to God. Where he provides forgiveness for our sin, as John already told us: “the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7
  + The moment was so powerful, with the sun went dark for 3 hours and at the moment of his death, God caused a powerful earthquake, all of which left the Roman Centurion who’s job it was to make sure Jesus died to say: “Truly this was the Son of God!”
  + The cross and empty tomb of Jesus are the centerpiece of our faith. That’s why we named our church Redemption Hill. We never move away from the cross.
  + As John Stott said: “The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled, but we have to get near enough for its sparks to fall on us.”
  + But there’s one more witness…
* The Spirit…
  + Now, we become convinced that Jesus is the Son of God, just as his baptism and crucifixion tell us, because the Spirit of truth convinces us that it is true!
  + One of the primary role’s of God the Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Trinity) is to point us to Christ and the truth of Christ.
  + The Spirit convinces… he convicts.
    - **John 16:8-9 “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment…”**
    - And he goes on to say, “**When the Spirit of turret comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)**
  + We suddenly find ourselves saying. That makes sense. It adds up. I thought it was crazy, but it can’t be. It connects the dots. It explains, not just our world; it explains my life.

A testimony is more credible when there are multiple sources that corroborate evidence with a unified voice. *Verses 7-8*

* The Old Testament stipulated that every charge must be confirmed by “two or three witnesses.” (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:5)
* We see once again in verse 8, echoing verse 6: “The Spirit is given priority because it is the Spirit who testifies through the water and the blood.”
* All three together announce: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. AND…
* This is the testimony of God, for more convincing than the testimony of any person could provide. John argues from the lesser to the greater. You take man’s testimony, how about God’s. God has spoken unmistakably about his Son!

*Verse 9*

T: Not only should new expectations rise because of God’s testimony about Jesus…

**II. New expectations rise because of God’s testimony in you. (5:10a)**

*Verse 10*

* For those who have believed in Jesus, they have a voice screaming from within them, this is true! What has been said about Jesus is legit, so legit that I can bank my entire life on it.
* How does this happen? We know from what John has said earlier in this letter, as well as the rest of the Bible that he has to be talking about the Holy Spirit. Here’s how it works:
  + God gives his Spirit as a gift to every follower of Jesus. Jesus told us in **John 14:16-17 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth (there it is again), whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”** Wow!
  + Listen, I believe one my most important jobs this year is to help all of us come to a better understanding of the Holy Spirit and a much, much, much deeper experience of the Holy Spirit in 2018. Major priority!
  + The Spirit is a person. (Him, not it)
  + The Spirit is personal. We have a relationship with him. (We know him, not just know about him. - That’s not semantics. It’s the difference between heaven and hell. It’s the difference between a Christian life that resembles heaven to a great degree or to a very small one.)
  + The Spirit gives us everything we need, including assurance that we belong to Jesus.
    - This is more than “I can feel it in my bones.”
    - We possess an internal realization in increasing measures that this is all true. Sometimes we don’t feel it and we need him to remind us and fill us again with this confidence.
    - He goes on to say in Romans 8:16 - “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”
    - Which sounds a lot like what John already said at the end of chapter 3:“And by this we know that he abides in us (God abides in us, Jesus abides in us), by the Spirit whom he has given us.” (1 John 3:24)
  + All of this happens as we walk in the Spirit, as we fill our lives with God’s truth, as we live in true Christian community. It’s true. It’s true. It’s true. Our expectations can be through the roof because Jesus is real, he is the Son of God, he did live a perfect life, exercise a kingdom ministry the world has never seen, die for us and rise from the dead for us, and most of all for his own glory!
  + But I don’t feel this internal testimony, you keep walking with God day by day. You’ll hear his voice.

T:

**III. Experience new expectations because of the life of Christ in you (5:11-12)**

John is very clear. Everyone, including all of us today, has two options in life. Believe or reject the testimony about Jesus. Call God a liar or receive his truth. Experience the life Jesus brings or miss it, and you don’t want to miss it!

*Read 5:10b-12*

What is your testimony about this testimony? What are you saying?

* Jesus is Lord. He is the Son of God. I believe the testimony about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I have new life in him! OR
* It’s a nice story, but Jesus isn’t really the Son of God and Savior of the world.
  + Rejection of Jesus takes varied forms:
    - Some people reject God because of a bad experience with people.
    - Some people reject God because they believe they have a better god to believe in.
    - Some people reject God because of apathy or indifference.
    - Some people reject God because they are too busy chasing after other priorities (work, family, money, you name it).
  + Rejection is still rejection any way you slice.
  + Those who reject him (and let be really clear, if you don’t embrace him fully, if you know about him, but don’t really know him) will be without excuse when you stand before God one day. That’s what John is saying. Why mince words? It is what it is.
* John is driving his whole argument to say, “God’s testimony is true. Those who believe have life. Those who remain in unbelief miss life.

What is your story? Do you have life. Life is in Christ. That’s where we find it!

* And this life begins NOW! It is a current possession, and it lasts FOREVER.
* Can you believe God invites us into this? Still amazed.
* To have Jesus is to have life in all its fullness.

Let me make a twofold application out of these truths by giving you a preview of our 2018 vision that I’ll be sharing in two weeks on **Vision Sunday** at a special service at Medford High School (489 Winthrop St. Don’t miss it - bring the whole neighborhood!) :) Our 2018 vision is our primary focus for the year. In other words, if one thing happens in Redemption Hill this year, *this* is what we want it to be:

**The fullness of God in us overflowing through us.** God’s work in us. God’s work through us.

Expect more of God in you!

* If you have eternal life (a life that goes on and on and on and gets better and better and better FOREVER), then expect a deeper experience of that life and SEEK a deeper experience of that life, every day.
* Don’t settle for anything less!
* Let’s lock in on seeking more of God more than ever before, because with God there is always more.
  + I’m talking about this culture of prayer building in you! Praying more frequently and fervently alone, with our friends, with our family, with our spouse, with people in our Group. I’m talking about praying to the point where we taste and see how satisfying it is just to be with God that it doesn’t feel like a chore, it feels like the greatest way we could ever spend our time.
  + I’m talking about devouring the Word. Start with 31 days in the Psalms. For some of you that would be a HUGE step. For some of you, double up. Read two psalms a day. Read these Psalms and another book in the New Testament.
  + I’m talking about seeking this fullness together every week together on Sundays, through the week in Groups, and on special occasion like the Worship Night we have on 1/17 (where our groups and other churches to seek God together through song and prayer) and like the Women’s s
* But it’s not just fullness in us simply for the sake of ourselves, it’s a fullness that overflows through us for the sake of those around us.

Expect more of God through you!

* The end of verse 12 must bother us. “Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
* I was so proud of how we took big-time steps as a church to refuel our focus and effort on living an invitation life in 2017. That was our vision focus. You can look around the room and see how many new people connected with RHC and the vast majority of those came because someone invited them.
* But let me say this: we’ll know how greatly the 2017 vision is in us by how we continue to fulfill that in 2018. Is it continuing in us? Is it continuing in us to the point of passing it on to others? Is there truly a culture of invitation? I have no doubt there is and it is growing…
* Here’s a bold claim: if you really pursue God like never before - I *guarantee* this will be the most powerful year of pointing people to Jesus you’ve ever experienced.

Why wouldn’t this be the greatest year of your life in Christ? You think God wants something different. He’s working to make it happen. Just open your hands and receive it!

*Invite Band UP*

*Conclusion*: I pray these urge you (in light of all that is true about Jesus), to experience new and greater and adventure-producing expectations (think about that) in how God wants to work in you and through you.

Specific Appeal… ONE…

In light of all of who Jesus is, and all of who Jesus is in me, here’s what I want to ask you to pray this morning:

God, in this new year, cause new expectations to rise in me.

Would you pray and ask God to build this in you? And then let’s sing and celebrate all that is ours in CHRIST.