

“There’s Anticipation, then There’s Eager Expectation”

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In this series of posts during our church’s physical separation from one another I have tried to highlight the importance that each one of us needs to sharpen our Biblical-theological perspective. The anticipation of being together again to worship our great God was *initially* met these last two Sundays. And indeed, it was spiritually exhilarating! For the families that were able to come these gatherings were analogously reminiscent of those OT pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. You can sense their anticipation and excitement scripturally captured in the so-called Psalms of Ascent. Listen to, for example, the first four verses of Psalm 122:

122 I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
2 Our feet are standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem,
3 Jerusalem, that is built
As a city that is compact together;
4 To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of ^[a]the LORD—
^[b]An ordinance for Israel—

(Psalm 122:1-4, NASB)

Physical proximity as a people of God enhanced their worship; remember Psalm 133:

133 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brothers to dwell together in unity!
2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Coming down upon the beard,
Even Aaron’s beard,
Coming down upon the edge of his robes.
3 It is like the dew of Hermon
Coming down upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever.

We are hoping as leaders at Grace Immanuel Bible Church to incrementally return to our normal scheduling of services and activities as God’s providence allows. There’s no room for presumption in such planning but an acute need for divine wisdom from above. So pray for us. In view of this, we’re all aware of the reality that our anticipations, even of such good things, do not govern God’s providential workings. He may in His infinite wisdom and for our ultimate good send some detours our way. So don’t hold on to your anticipations with an iron grip. Trust and hope in Him!

Now with a biblically derived perspective let’s focus on our ultimate destination and the *eager expectation* of it. When this consummation of our salvation arrives there will be no more fluctuations regarding *our current* “anticipations”. The eager expectation I’m referring to is conveyed by a key verb that occurs seven times in the NT:

¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation *waits eagerly* for the revealing of the sons of God.

(Romans 8:19, NASB, italics added)

²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *waiting eagerly* for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

(Romans 8:23, NASB, italics added)

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we *wait eagerly* for it.

(Romans 8:25, NASB, italics added)

⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, *awaiting eagerly* the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(1 Corinthians 1:7, NASB, italics added)

⁵ For through the Spirit we *eagerly await* by faith the righteousness for which we hope.

(Galatians 5:5, NIV, italics added)

²⁰ For our ^acitizenship is in heaven, from which also we *eagerly wait* for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

(Philippians 3:20, NASB, italics added)

²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who *eagerly await* Him.

(Hebrews 9:28, NASB, italics added)

When this last chapter of our salvation history arrives all anticipations and eager expectations give way to the unfathomable pleasures of the eternal worship of God and the Lamb. Therefore we totally resonate with the second to the last verse of the Bible:

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

(Revelation 22:20, NASB).