Devotional – Shattered Expectations

“‘Simon, Son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’

‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’

Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’” – John 20: 15

When I was younger I used to marvel at public figures like Benjamin Franklin and Oprah Winfrey.

Both had long lists of titles following their names: Scientist, Printer, Inventor, Author, Musician, and Politician (for Franklin) CEO, Producer, Innovator, Publisher, and Actress (for Oprah). It seemed so impressive to me. How could two people, let alone one, accomplish so much in a single lifetime?

Since then, one of my greatest ambitions in life has been to rock the world just as much, if not more, than the Franklin’s and Oprah’s of the world. Somehow, I thought that once I had all the titles and riches they possessed, my life would simply fall into place. I’d be happy, healthy, and wealthy all the time!

It wasn’t until I was older that I realized what being an Oprah or a Franklin meant. Oprah typically starts her day at 5:30am and works until 11:00pm, while Franklin followed an even stricter schedule usually rising at 5:00am and going to bed at 10:00pm.

In other words, long, hard, and regimented hours are what it takes to be the next great innovator.

As a College student, I found this idea less than appealing. Why would anyone waste what precious little time they had working for riches they had no time to enjoy?

Yet in the Bible, “Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go’” (John 20: 17-19).

As an adult, we often are told by our bosses, our kid’s soccer coaches, and even our families when and where to report. And more likely than not, social norms dictate how we will dress and act in those given situations.

Yet, nine times out of ten we’d rather be chilling on our couch in our PJ’s binging on the latest release from Netflix.

Children believe that adults are free to do what they want when they want and while that’s true (to an extent) adults know that freedom comes at a cost. We have to sacrifice our time to a job in order to pay for our vacations, sleep in order to raise our children, and money to pay our bills.
The funny thing is, Jesus knew this. He lived among us long enough to understand the constraints, obligations, worries, and ambitions we have in our hearts.

The difference is, Jesus didn’t ask us to live for a long list of titles, riches, schedules, or Netflix. Instead, he asked us to live to follow Him.

In one of the last conversations Jesus has with Peter, he continually asks him, “Do you love me?” When Peter responds with “Yes”, Jesus follows that answer with a call to action, “Take care of my sheep.”

Following Jesus does not mean we simply voice our love for him. Following Jesus means we give all our words and deeds to Him.

I’m not suggesting we need to jam-pack our schedules with more bible studies, mission projects, and church services or that we have to become as regimented as the Oprah’s and Franklin’s of the world.

What I am suggesting, is that we take some time away from the screen, away from the noise and expectations of the outside world and take some time to listen to God: to find His meaning and His purpose for our lives.

Then, when we respond to that call, I have a feeling we’ll be amazed to see how God shatters the constraints, obligations, worries, and ambitions we hold in our heart to begin building us a life that is inconceivable.

Prayer: Jesus, I know I was created in the image of my Heavenly Father in order to praise His Holy Name and live for His purpose. Today, I pray for an open heart to accept his plan, the direction to follow His path, the patience to wait on His timing, and the knowledge to know when it comes. I pray this in Your strong name. Amen.