



SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD

Where Is Jesus When I Need Him?

Life Reference: John 11:1-44

Focus Verse:

“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (John 11:4).

Have you ever cried out, “Where are You God? I need You *now!*”

This is what happened with Mary and Martha in John 11. Their brother, Lazarus, lay sick. Jesus is their friend, so they send word to Him of the situation. He sends back the message, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God” (verse 4). Despite what seem encouraging words, Lazarus dies, and Jesus waits two more days before finally starting toward Bethany.

We know the end of the story—Jesus calls into the tomb and the bound Lazarus walks out, restored to life after four days. But Mary and Martha only knew the reality of that moment. Their brother was dead and now lay in a tomb. Where was Jesus?

We can imagine the questions that must have gone through their minds? “Why didn’t He come? Doesn’t He care? Didn’t He say that my brother would not die?” Their emotions would have gone from hope when they sent the messenger, to worry when Jesus delayed, and then to disappointment and despair when Lazarus died.

Life Reflection:

Have you personally experienced a time when you felt Jesus did not answer your prayer?

What thoughts and emotions went through your mind?

Have you faced the same emotions and questions when problems overwhelm you? In desperation you cry out to God, but nothing seems to change. Where is He? Doesn't He care? Is He ignoring my prayers? Perhaps you felt perplexed, lonely, disappointed, or forsaken.

Life Response:

All of us have faced times when we felt our prayers were not being answered. We may feel like Job when he was facing the most difficult time in his life. Listen to his words in Job 23:7-8.

“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.”

It is at this point that Job's trust in God becomes evident. Although God seems to have hidden Himself completely, Job is able to declare, “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (verse 10). We also need to trust that God will bring us through our difficult situation.

Is it possible we felt our prayer was unanswered because God did not step in *when* or *how* we thought He should? We may not always see the complete picture when in the midst of a problem. Only later can we look back and realize God's hand was upon us the entire time.

There are many reasons God delays His answer or does not respond as we wish.

- He may have protected us from a bad situation.
- He may be sending us in a new direction—one which we would never imagine.
- He may orchestrate a divine appointment we would otherwise miss without the delay.
- He may replace our “good” plan with one that is much better.
- He may be using the problems we face to transform us into His likeness. (Read II Corinthians 3:18 and I Peter 4:19.)
- His work in our lives can become a testimony to others. (Read John 9:3 and II Corinthians 4:8-10.)
- He knows how much we can bear and will make a way of escape. (Read I Corinthians 10:13.)

Life Reflection:

Has there been a time when God's delay was actually for your own good?

What lessons did you learn during the waiting process?

Action Points

Don't stop praying. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6).

Confess any sin in your life. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). Also read I John 3:22.

Pray with boldness. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Pray in the name of Jesus. "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13).

Trust God's love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3).

Trust God's timing. Read Hebrews 6:13-15.

Whether four days (like Lazarus), four months, four years—or never—we must trust His plan is for our good. Faith says that God can do it, but trust holds firm when He does not.

Who knows what things He will do in our lives that will ultimately bring Him glory!

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