



## CELL GUIDE

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**TOPIC** Where Are You, God?

**SPEAKER** Ps Darren Kuek

**THEME** Common Questions We Need Handles To

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Are you disappointed that your prayer has not been answered? You could be longing for healing, for a job, for a relationship, or for a baby. You have prayed earnestly over weeks, months, even years, but your circumstances have not improved. How do you settle the unanswered prayer in your heart?

Citing the story of Lazarus (John 11:1-44), Ps Darren explains why sometimes God does not answer prayers immediately. If we are too quick to give up on God, we may miss out on His divine plans for our lives.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN WE ARE DISAPPOINTED

When Lazarus was deathly sick, his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus, asking Him to come quickly to heal Lazarus. Jesus was at a place near their hometown. Surely, they expected that the Lord would quickly go to Lazarus. However, Jesus had a different plan. Instead of healing, He intended to resurrect Lazarus from the dead for the glory of God. Therefore, Jesus delayed going to Lazarus until he was dead and buried.

Unaware of Jesus' divine plan, Martha and Mary said to Him: "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." (John 11:21, 32). These words echoed their disappointments. Yet the Lord did not reveal that He had come to raise Lazarus from the dead.

This story reveals why God in His sovereignty may sometimes delay answering our prayers. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. Just because God does not work in the way we expect Him to, it does not mean that He is not interested to help us. While waiting upon the Lord, we can prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand the possible reasons, if any, for our unanswered prayers.

## 1. Seek God's Wisdom in His Word

Sometimes, unanswered prayer may be a sign of spiritual blockages. According to the Bible, some things in our lives or personal conduct do hinder our prayers. They are:

1. Doubt (James 1:6)
2. Bad relationship with spouse (1 Peter 3:7)
3. Impure motives (James 4:3)
4. Ignoring and mistreating the poor (Proverbs 21:13)
5. Praying to impress people (Matthew 6:5)
6. Disobedience (Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 28:9)
7. Lack of reconciliation / forgiveness (Mark 11:25)

As we truthfully examine our own lives, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us some of the things that are hindering our prayers. When He convicts us, we must be quick to repent.

## 2. Confide in God and His People

In our disappointment, we may be tempted to stay away from God, but the right thing to do is just the opposite - to draw near to God for strength. Martha ran to meet Jesus the moment she heard that He was coming (John 11:20). David poured out to God in his distress (Psalm 13:1, Psalm 88:18). Although Mary only responded after being urged by Martha, she did eventually go quickly to the Lord and fell at His feet (John 11:28-32).

In his personal testimony, Ps Darren shared about his struggle to attend church on the day that his wife had miscarried after a decade of trying to conceive. Eventually, he chose to honour God. He went to church, was ministered by the worship, and received spiritual and emotional support from God and from fellow Christians. Subsequently, God blessed them with a child, and faith has been strengthened through this experience.

## 3. Believe in God and His Goodness

Despite the reality that Lazarus was dead, Martha faithfully trusted in the Lord. She expressed hope that Jesus could still do something about her situation (John 11:21-22). Martha further confessed that she believes Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (John 11:27). Let us be like Martha and not let circumstances dim our hope in Jesus. He loves us and died for our sins. He is the author and perfecter of our faith.

## CONCLUSION

Being disappointed is not the real problem but staying disappointed is. Let us trust God even though our flesh wants us to do otherwise. God may use certain circumstances to strength us. If so, His grace is sufficient for us (2 Corinthians 12:8-9). Let us also watch out for the 7 things that hinder our prayers, and be quick to repent. As we honour God with our faith, He will honour us in His ways for His glory.

# QUESTIONS

1. Read John 11:1-7. What expectations might Martha and Mary have of the Lord? Which could you identify with and why?

2. Reflecting on your own experience, share about a situation (in your work, home, school, family, relationship) in which God has caused things to work out in a way that was beyond your expectation. How does this experience help you to settle some of the unanswered prayers in your heart?

3. How is God prompting you to reach out and encourage a fellow Christian / pre-believing family, friend and colleague with today's message?