



Frustrating Faith: When it Seems God is not Paying Attention

Mark 6:14-20; Matthew 11:2-6, 11

The Bottom Line: When God seems inattentive, look outside your immediate surroundings.

Welcome Verse: Isaiah 55:8-9

Introduction:

One of the most frustrating things about believing in God is when God seems Inattentive, Uncooperative, or Late. When you feel neglected and-when your prayers are not only unanswered, but things go the other way.

Two things make it worse:

1. Preachers who make it sound easy: “Just believe.” Or preachers who blame you: “You aren’t believing enough . . . sin!”
2. The people around you to whom God seems to be so attentive. They don’t even have to pray for stuff. It just comes their way naturally.

For the next three weeks, we’re going to look at three people from the New Testament that God cared deeply about. The first one he simply refused to answer a simple prayer. And the others he just didn’t come through in time with something he had done for total strangers.

Tension:

Here’s why I love these stories: It makes me feel like I’m not quite so alone. I’m often tempted to believe, “If God is silent, he must be absent.”

Truth:

Read: Mark 6:14-20

Study John’s Confusion. His life is hanging in the balance, and who he thought was the Messiah isn’t coming to his rescue.

Can you relate?

Isn't it amazing how a change of scenery, good or bad, can affect your faith and raise doubts in your life?

Jesus answer is in Matthew 11:4-1.

Your personal circumstances do not necessarily coincide with how God feels about you.

God's seeming inactivity in your life is not a reflection of his activity in the world.

Conclusion:

Herod eventually beheaded John.

Jesus was eventually crucified.

God did nothing to avert these seeming tragedies.

But God never moved off the throne. He was and is always in control, even during those terrible times.

From that remote area of the world, the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ was launched with such force that lives are still being impacted today.

Application

When God seems inattentive, do what Jesus instructed John to do.

Look Back at all God has done *for* and *in* you.

Look Out at all God is doing in the world around you.

Look Ahead at what God is promising to do.

Next Steps:

- Memorize Matthew 11:5.
- Look Back.
- Look Out.
- Look Ahead.

Discussion questions for group this week:

1. If I could ask a question it would be....

2. What does this teach me about God?

3. What does this teach me about me?

4. How do I apply this to my life?