

What Do You Do When the Answer to Prayer Is Delayed?

Trusting God When Prayers and Desires Seem to Take Longer Than Expected

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Key Texts: Mark 5:21–24 & 35–43; Galatians 6:9; Romans 4:20–21

Praise God. Hallelujah.

Today I want to speak on a subject every believer will face at some point: **what do you do when the answer to your prayer, or the desire in your heart, is delayed?**

If we are honest, many of us expect quick answers when we pray. Yet Scripture and experience teach us that God often works on a different timetable.

If you have prayed and not seen the answer in the time you expected, you are not alone. Throughout Scripture, God's people often received a promise and then waited before they saw its fulfilment.

Abraham was promised a son and waited years before Isaac was born (Genesis 12:1–4; 15:4–6; 21:5). Joseph dreamed of greatness, yet before the palace came the pit and the prison (Genesis 37; 39–41). David was anointed king, yet he spent years fleeing from Saul before he sat on the throne (1 Samuel 16:13; 18–24; 2 Samuel 5:1–4).

So when God seems to delay, remember this: **His timing is not our timing, but He is never late.**

Let us turn to Mark 5:21–24, 35–43, where we see a powerful picture of delay, faith, fear, and the faithfulness of Jesus.

Jairus and the Delay That Seemed Too Late

Jairus, a synagogue ruler, came to Jesus in desperation. His little daughter was dying, and he fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with Him to come and lay hands on her so that she would be healed and live (Mark 5:22–23).

Jesus went with him (Mark 5:24). Imagine Jairus's relief: the answer seemed close.

But on the way, Jesus was interrupted by a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. She touched His garment in faith and was healed, and Jesus stopped to minister to her (Mark 5:25–34).

While Jesus was still speaking, messengers arrived with devastating news: *"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"* (Mark 5:35).

From Jairus's perspective, the delay had made the situation worse. What began as sickness now looked final.

But Jesus immediately said, **"Do not fear, only believe"** (Mark 5:36).

That is the heart of this message: when delay comes, when circumstances worsen, and when others say it is over, Jesus still says, **Do not be afraid. Only believe.**

What Delay Can Do to Us

Delays test us deeply. They expose discouragement, weariness, fear, frustration, and the temptation to act outside of God's will.

When answers are delayed, we may begin to think God has forgotten us, or we may try to force our own solution—as Abraham and Sarah did when they grew tired of waiting (Genesis 16:1–2).

Delay can also breed fear. Fear says the promise will never happen, the prayer is over, and the opportunity is gone. But Jesus did not tell Jairus to panic; He said, **“Do not fear, only believe”** (Mark 5:36).

Delay is dangerous not because God has changed, but because it tempts us to stop trusting before the answer arrives.

Three Things to Do When the Answer Is Delayed

1. Hold on to your faith in God’s promise

If God has spoken, and what you are believing for is in line with His Word, do not throw away your confidence. God watches over His word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). His delay is not necessarily His denial.

We must distinguish between our wishes and God’s promises. God will never endorse what contradicts Scripture, but when something aligns with His will, we can stand in faith even before we see the result.

For example, praying for the salvation of loved ones is in line with God’s heart, for He desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3–4; 2 Peter 3:9). So keep praying, keep believing, and keep standing on His Word.

2. Do not grow weary while you wait

Scripture says, **“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up”** (Galatians 6:9). Waiting is not wasted when it is done with God.

While you wait, keep praying, obeying, serving, loving, and doing what is right. The enemy often attacks most fiercely when breakthrough is near because he wants you to quit too soon.

Do not let delay make you bitter, careless, or compromising. Stay faithful in what God has already asked you to do.

3. Keep thanking and praising God

One of the strongest acts of faith in a season of delay is to keep thanking and praising God. Thanksgiving anchors the heart. Praise reminds the soul that God is still good, still present, and still faithful.

Abraham grew strong in faith by giving glory to God, fully convinced that what God had promised He was able to perform (Romans 4:20–21). In the same way, when we thank God in the delay, we declare that His promise still stands.

Conclusion

Jairus teaches us that delay does not mean defeat. The situation may look worse, the report may sound final, and people may say there is no point in believing anymore. But Jesus still says, **“Do not fear; only believe”** (Mark 5:36).

So when the answer seems delayed, do not surrender your faith. Do not grow weary in doing good. Do not stop praising God. Hold on, stay steady, and trust Him. The God who made the promise is faithful, and He will do what He has said in His perfect time.

God's delays are not necessarily His denials. Sometimes the delay is part of how He deepens our faith, reveals His power, and teaches us to depend on Him more fully.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You because Your Word is true and Your promises are sure. Thank You because You are faithful, dependable, and kind. Today, I choose to trust You even when I do not understand the timing.

Lord, for every person who feels weary because of delay, I pray for fresh strength. Where there has been fear, release faith. Where there has been discouragement, release hope. Where there has been confusion, bring peace.

Help us not to throw in the towel. Help us not to take matters into our own hands. Help us to remain steadfast, prayerful, obedient, and full of thanksgiving while we wait for Your perfect will to be revealed.

Just as You spoke to Jairus, speak to our hearts today: **"Do not be afraid; only believe."** Give us grace to hold on to Your promises and confidence to know that You will never fail.

We thank You because You are the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). We thank You because You hear us. We thank You because You are working even when we cannot yet see it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Invitation and Blessing

If you would like prayer today—whether for strength, renewed faith, or to commit your life to God—I encourage you to come forward so that we can pray with you.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace (Numbers 6:24–26).

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.

2 Key Takeaways

1. **A delay is not the same as a denial.** God's timing may differ from ours, but He remains faithful and is never late.
2. **When answers seem delayed, our response should be faith, perseverance, and praise.** Like Jairus, we are called to resist fear and keep believing.

2 Reflection Questions

1. **Where in my life am I being tempted to give up because God's answer seems delayed?**
2. **How can I continue to trust, obey, and praise God while I wait?**

Memory Verse

Mark 5:36 — *"Do not be afraid; only believe."*