



When You Feel Like God Has Failed You

By Lynn Cowell

"So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'" John 11:41-42 (NIV)

I don't get it. I prayed the prayer. I had faith in Him. Why wasn't my prayer answered? I feel like God has failed me.

Maybe Martha wrestled with this sort of dialogue in her head. Her brother Lazarus, Jesus' close friend, was sick. She sent for Jesus. Why did He seemingly stall?

I love when the Bible includes hard stories — because life *is* hard. Like Martha, we need confidence in our God when we wrestle with disappointment.

Martha knew Jesus could heal her brother. She said to Jesus, *"I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask"* (John 11:22, NIV). But she didn't understand why He hadn't come sooner (John 11:21).

Still, Jesus knew God heard Him. He prayed confidently: *"Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me"* (John 11:41-42).

Jesus then called loudly, *"Lazarus, come out!"* (John 11:43, NIV). And the dead Lazarus came out of his tomb alive!

Jesus thanked God in the past tense (*"you have heard me"*), yet this is the first time we see Jesus praying to His Father in this passage. Jesus' words reveal that He and His Father must have been talking all along — in continual communication on Jesus' journey, during His meeting with Lazarus' sisters, and on the way to the tomb.

As God's children, we also have this open door of communication available to us.

No matter where we are, how we feel, or what we're facing, He's with us, waiting to converse. This doesn't mean every prayer will be answered the way we want; that's not what prayer is for. Prayer is communion with our heavenly Father. We can have confidence that He hears us, just like Jesus.

Jesus *knew* God listened to Him and knew God's heart toward Him in John 11. Jesus' disciples would witness this confidence even as He wrestled in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane and later on the cross.

At the crucifixion, maybe the disciples felt like God had failed them. *Jesus said God hears Him. Why didn't God answer His plea on the cross?* But they would have been far from the truth. God was answering the greatest of prayers: salvation for all through Jesus (John 3:16). We can have confidence in our heavenly Father. **Though we may not understand His ways or whys, we can trust that His outcome — just as it was at Lazarus' tomb and on Jesus' cross — will be for the glory of God.**

Prayer: Father, like Jesus, may I have confidence that You hear me. Remind me today not only to speak to You but also to listen for Your voice. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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