

Warm Up

1. Describe your favourite food and why do you love it so much?
2. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a miracle? If Yes, please describe it. If not, describe an experience, moment or incident that has had a lasting memory for you.
3. Do you set spiritual (or faith) goals? If yes, can you share one? If not, why not?

WORD

*“But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His **wounds we are healed.**” - Isaiah 53:5*

The above scripture tells us that when Jesus went to the cross, He did not just die for our sins to be forgiven. He conquered death and by the shedding of His blood, so we can also declare healing over our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical state.

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”
- John 14:12*

As a disciple of Jesus, according to these two segments of scripture, we are able to apply the same healing to ourselves and for others we are praying for.

However, the reality is that there are moments that some of our prayers are not answered.

Today we will explore 3 reasons on why God does not answer our prayers for miracles, which are instant healings. Healing is a process; often times we pray for healing but expect a miracle, so we've set ourselves up for a "let down."

While there are many more than 3, the first reason God may not answer prayers is:

1) He does not perform miracles to prove Himself.

When we look at the accounts of Jesus's life, he indeed does miracles. But, it is always to point people to God, not to prove Himself to critics, or to prove God is powerful enough.

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” ... The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.” – Luke 4:3, 9

Jesus refused to prove His identity. Three years later, His identity as the Son of God was proven upon His resurrection.

A second reason God may not answer prayers for miracles or healing is:

2) He does not want to interfere with (or alter) His ultimate plan.

There are many things that we may never understand because we only see from our (tiny) perspective. God's ultimate plan and purpose is always greater than what we think.

"...to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..." –Ephesians 3:20 excerpt

Like a good parent, sometimes God will withhold things from us because there are greater things that He has set in place. Sometimes the only way to get to what His greater plan is, is to go through a form of suffering. But we are not alone!

We can have great hope in the face of suffering and unanswered prayer, because God Himself led the way through suffering. Jesus (God the Son) suffered literally to the point of death, when He gave up His spirit on the cross. Beyond death, there is an assurance of the resurrection because Jesus was raised from the dead. This grants us access to the first Isaiah promise we read in today's lesson, and gives us strength and hope in the midst of our present state to look forward to our future resurrection and complete union with God.

A Third reason God does not always do miracles is

3) When there is no faith.

⁵⁴ [Jesus] returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, "Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?" ⁵⁵ Then they scoffed, "He's just the carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. ⁵⁶ All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?" ⁵⁷ And they were deeply offended and **refused to believe in him.**

Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honoured everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family." ⁵⁸ And **so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.**" – Matthew 13:54-58

"...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."
- Hebrews 11:6

Our faith pleases God. It doesn't matter whether our emotions attempt to dictate how we feel about a situation, if we believe God, we will move the heart of God.

Faith is not simply working up a feeling or suppressing doubts; it is a demonstrated commitment to getting to the One on whom we stake our trust.¹

¹ IVP New Testament Commentaries, note on Mark 2:4-5, adapted.

The bible records Jesus saying:

*“I tell you the truth, if you had faith even **as small as a mustard seed**, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.” – Matthew 17:20*

Even if our faith is small and we have doubts, we can ask God to increase our faith and help us with our doubts, just like the Father with the epileptic son:

*“How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, **if you can.**” “What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” The father **instantly** cried out, “I do believe, but **help me overcome my unbelief!**” - Mark 9:21-24*

Knowing God is good, God is love, and he suffered first, we can apply faith to any situation, whether God answers with a yes, no, or wait. Why? Because:

**OUR FAITH ISN’T BASED ON WHAT GOD DOES.
IT IS BASED ON WHO GOD IS AND WHAT HE HAS ALREADY DONE.**

Jesus declared “It is finished” on the cross.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Since our faith is based on who God is, describe what you believe about ‘Who God is.’
2. What is the state (or condition) of your faith? How healthy is it? How can it grow?
3. Is there a physical, emotional, mental or spiritual healing that you are believing God for, either for yourself or another? Based on what we’ve covered today, how can you apply faith to the situation?

PRAYER

1. Pray for faith to consistently grow in all situations.
2. Pray for any physical, emotional, mental or spiritual healing needs within the group and/or for people they are believing God will heal.
3. Pray for everyone in the group to grow in their understanding of ‘Who God’ is and ‘What He has done on the cross.’
4. Pray for any other needs of the group and people’s VIP list.