

WHEN GOD?

When God Is Inattentive

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Scripture: Mark 6:14–20; Matthew 11:2–6, 11

Idea: Your personal circumstances do not necessarily coincide with God’s feelings about you. When God seems inattentive, look outside your immediate surroundings.

Salt: Today’s story has a little bit of everything: deception, violence, and intrigue. And it surrounds one man’s experience—an experience we can all relate to. In the middle, Jesus penetrates the confusion with a statement that sheds blinding light on this issue of doubt.

Introduction

1. One of the most frustrating things about believing in God is when God seems **Inattentive, Uncooperative, or Late**; when you feel neglected, when your prayers are not only unanswered, but things go the other way.
2. Two things make it worse:
 - **Preachers** who make it sound easy: “Just believe.” Or who blame you: “You aren’t believing enough . . . sin!”
 - **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.
 - They aren’t even good people.
 - You are praying for a job and they are praying about whether to stay where they are or take a new offer.
 - You hear them talk about praying for parking spaces at the mall and God came through . . . “Hey, just shut up already.”
 - You are praying to have a child and they are praying theirs will sleep through the night.
3. So, for the next three weeks, we are going to look at three people from the New Testament that God cared deeply about: one he refused to answer a simple prayer for. And the others he just didn’t come through in time with something he had done for strangers.
4. Here’s why I love these stories: it makes me feel not quite so alone. I’m tempted to believe that **“If God is silent, he must be absent.”**

Story number one is about the man whom Jesus said, “He is the greatest man every born.” Wow!

The story begins . . .