

After Amen

What to Do When You're
Waiting on God

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The Crossing Church
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OPENING

We are welcoming a guest speaker and friend of The Crossing, Rusty George, this Sunday who will share some insights from his new book titled, "After Amen: What to Do When You're Waiting on God." Throughout your life, you have probably prayed for something but didn't hear from God for what seemed like forever, or maybe you never heard from God so you stopped praying for it. It is understandable to question God's methods and means. We may question our beliefs about the goodness and steadfastness of God. We may pour out our hearts in prayer only to feel like God may not have heard us clearly – or at all. Struggling with unanswered prayer is a common Christian experience, and this week's sermon will provide assurance that He is with us in the waiting.

SCRIPTURE

John 2:4-12 (NLT) – ⁴“Dear woman, that’s not our problem,” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.” ⁵But his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” ⁶ Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus told the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” When the jars had been filled, ⁸ he said, “Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies.” So the servants followed his instructions. ⁹ When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. ¹⁰ “A host always serves the best wine first,” he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!” ¹¹ This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

OBSERVATION

When Jesus went to a wedding in Cana with his mother, Mary, the wine happened to run out during the celebration. Back in these days, weddings could last for days or weeks because some guests would travel long distances; it would not be good for the host to be out of food or drink when more guests were expected. Mary understood that there could be potential legal trouble brought upon the new couple because of the laws

of the day, so she asked Jesus to help supply more wine. His response was no, or, more specifically, not yet. He had already been working “behind the scenes” to use this event to restore the stores of wine for the wedding guests and display His Godly abilities to His disciples. Jesus’ response to Mary may seem abrupt, but it was intended to show that His methods and timing are better than ours and seeing our prayers be answered will likely take some time – and some work on our part.

Question: Have you seen God answer prayers in ways you did not ask for or expect?

Question: What do you think may be God’s reasoning for not answering some of your prayers?

APPLICATION

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, He provided several miracles, parables, and teachings to Jews and Gentiles, or non-Jews, alike. Later on in John 14:27, Jesus informs His disciples that He “does not give as the world gives” and to accept the kind of peace we can only find in Him. We spend a lot of time worrying and wondering about earthly matters such as material possessions, our level of income, and finding happiness when Jesus begs us to see that He alone can satisfy our hearts. When we pray and ask for something to change in our lives, or pray for a sign for what He would like us to do next, we may be missing out on the opportunity to take a few trips to the river so the figurative water can turn into wine. It may not come overnight or after a little while or at all. But while we wait for prayers to hopefully be answered and put in some work in the meantime, we can be confident knowing that He is always present in our successes and struggles. We can be confident that while we are working, He is faithful. We can be confident that He is working to do all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). While we wait for God to do the super, we’ve got to do the natural.

Key Learnings

- God is faithful not just while we _____, but while we _____.
- Keep _____ while you are _____

Question: What is it you are asking God to do in your life? Turn that into a prayer: “God, I’d really like you to _____, but until then I’ll keep _____.”

Question: How did you answer the last part of your prayer?

Question: What is it that you have been praying for that you’ve let go of or stopped praying for?

Question: Have you put some work into what you have been praying for lately? If not, how can you take a first step?

PRAYER

Lord, as we send our hearts' desires to you, please help us remember that it is only You who can truly satisfy in this life. Show us where to put in the work so we can see your glory. Give us the patience and strength to continue to lean on you as we work and while we wait. Teach us that unanswered prayers may be a, "Not yet." We trust You and Your ways, for they are higher than ours and You know what is best for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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Question: Have you put some work into what you have been praying for lately? If not, how can you take a first step?