

Day 4

Forgiving God

Day 4 Scriptures:

Mark 6:17-29

Matthew 11:2-6

We've all been there, haven't we? Nothing seems to be going right, and we ask God the simple question: Why is this happening to me? After everything I've done for You?

At times, our expectations of what God should do are different from what God actually does. If God always met your expectations, He wouldn't be God, He'd be your personal assistant.

No one knew this better than John the Baptist. John was sitting in prison, all because Herod was mad that John was criticizing his relationship choices. And John likely was waiting. Waiting on Jesus. After all, why *wouldn't* Jesus come and rescue him?

In Matthew 11:3 NLT, John asks this of Jesus: "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"

In other words, *"Are you really who you say you are? Are you actually the Messiah? Because it seems like if you were, I wouldn't be sitting here in this dirty prison cell."*

When I read this, I would expect that Jesus would show up triumphantly, break down the prison walls, and rescue John. (That sounds like a great worship song, doesn't it?)

Instead, Jesus says this:

“Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.” Matthew 11:4-5 NLT

He doesn't answer John's question directly with a “yes” or “no” answer, but I think as soon as John heard this, he knew that Jesus was the Messiah. After all, how else could the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dead be raised to life?

Then Jesus adds something that reframes everything and proceeds to turn it all upside down.

And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.” Matthew 11:6 NLT

Um, what?

I'd have thought Jesus might say, “God blesses those who don't fall into sin.” But He doesn't say that. Another translation of that same verse says, “God blesses those who are not offended by me.”

Essentially, Jesus was saying that you're blessed if you're not offended by God's activity—or at times the seeming lack thereof.

Honestly, that's hard for me to get my mind around. Jesus is saying that some people will be disappointed by His lack of activity. The relationship still fell apart. The cancer wasn't cured. John the Baptist ended up being beheaded in prison.

Our circumstances are not necessarily a reflection of His goodness, but His presence is. You're blessed when you can trust God in the valleys even after you've seen Him move mountains. Sometimes the blessing is there even without the breakthrough.

So when God doesn't act in the way you expect, it's okay to feel frustrated. It's okay to question, to doubt, or to wrestle.

But you're blessed when you're not offended by God and instead spend time with Him—forgiving Him, experiencing Him, and loving Him for who He is and not just for what He's done.

Pray: *God, I'm sorry for the way that I've treated You like an assistant instead of a Savior. Help me forgive You for not always meeting my expectations and forgive me for putting my human expectations on Your infinite power. In Jesus' name, amen.*