

## **When There Are No Answers**

*Presented by Mary Lowman*

Air Dates: February 19 - 23, 2024

### **Day One**

One of the first words we learn is why. If there's a child under five in your home right now, you probably hear that word many times each day. It seems from the very beginning we want explanations and answers. But what do we do when there are no answers?

I don't like unanswered questions, do you? I don't like loose ends and unfinished business. Yet life is full of them.

I tell you quite frankly there are many times I can't find an answer for things that happen to me and to others. I bombard heaven with my whys, but the heavens are silent. You may be right now in the midst of some situation for which you can find no answers. God is silent. The heavens are like stone. You've begged for explanations, but none have come. What do we do when there are no answers?

Mary and Martha faced that dilemma when Lazarus died. You know the story. They sent for Jesus to come and heal Lazarus. They were confident Jesus could heal him and prevent his death, and that he would do so, for they knew how Jesus loved Lazarus and them.

They sent out their cry for help, but we read in John 11:6 when Jesus heard Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. He loved them but he didn't come to their rescue. Why? I can see Martha and Mary waiting by the side of their sick brother, expecting Jesus to walk through the door any minute. But as hour by hour passed, Jesus didn't show up. Lazarus got worse and worse, and they watched him die.

Do you think they wondered if Jesus really loved them during that time? Don't you imagine they must have felt abandoned and forsaken by Jesus, to realize he could have come and healed their brother, but he chose not to?

Have you felt that way? I think we all go through similar reactions when there are no answers. Even if you feel abandoned, the good news is, you are not. Jesus has promised never to leave you or forsake you, and he never fails to keep his promise. So, let me encourage you today with what David said as recorded in Psalm 40:1: *I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.* The Lord hears your cry, and he has not forsaken you.

### **Day Two**

My question for you is: How do you and I, as Christians, cope when there are no answers? When we are convinced God should respond, circumstances should change, or things should be different? When we want so much to know why, and the answers aren't there?

Mary and Martha had that problem. They sent for Jesus to heal their brother, but when Jesus finally arrived, it was too late; Lazarus was already dead. Martha was upset with Jesus, and we read in John

11:21 she said to him, *Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.* She asked him for an answer to her question: Why didn't you come, Lord?

I find Jesus' words to her at this time very interesting. He did not defend his actions; he did not say, "Martha, let me explain to you exactly what I did and why." No, when Martha was looking for answers to her unanswered questions, Jesus took her back to basics.

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).*

You see, if Martha believes this, the condition of Lazarus at the present moment is not of such great consequence, because Lazarus believed in Jesus, and he would never die an eternal death.

Jesus wanted Martha to think with an eternal perspective. Yes, her brother's body was in a tomb, but the real Lazarus had not died, and if Martha can focus her mind on that, it will change her perspective altogether. And to her credit, Martha confessed out loud, *yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.*

When you don't have answers, stop and ask a different question: Who do you believe Jesus is? And then confess out loud exactly what you believe about the person of Jesus. It's important that you say it out loud, I think, so you can hear your own confession of faith.

We may never know some of the answers we're looking for this side of heaven, but we can always confidently know the answer to the question: Who do you think Jesus is? By concentrating your thoughts on who he is, you will have the peace and strength you need for those unanswered questions. If that was the question Jesus asked Martha when she wanted answers, then surely it is the starting place for us today when we want answers but they're not forthcoming.

### Day Three

I'm examining those times in our lives when there are no answers. Mary and Martha faced that situation when Lazarus died. Why didn't Jesus come and heal him? They could not understand why.

We all remember the end of this story; Jesus did meet their need by performing an incredible miracle and raising Lazarus from the dead. In this case, Mary and Martha finally got answers, as they saw their brother come forth after four days in that tomb.

So, eventually Martha and Mary could say to each other, "When it looked as though Jesus had forsaken us, he really was working on our behalf to do something even greater than we could imagine."

Sometimes it works out like that. We go through the no-answer period when the circumstances make no sense to us whatsoever, but at a later date, in God's time, we are able to see what God's good purpose was.

Maybe you are now in that tough place where Mary and Martha were initially. You're wondering why Jesus hasn't come to you; you're feeling unloved and neglected by him. Please do take courage and remember that often we misunderstand God's timetable. It may be that you will soon see the deliverance of God and your eyes will be opened to understand the whys.

But what about when we don't get those answers? Your Lazarus never comes out of the tomb. You're left to face those unanswered questions for the rest of your life.

You know, I believe for those of us who are Christ-followers, it is extremely difficult to face the fact God is not going to answer our questions, and we'll never know why certain things happen. After all, we're supposed to have answers, aren't we? We've always told people Jesus is the answer. Jesus can meet all their needs. Therefore, those unanswered questions can undermine our faith and cause us to doubt the God we serve.

I want to say that if you have unanswered questions, God is not going to condemn you for asking the questions, for feeling anger at the unjust circumstances. He even understands you're likely to go through a period of being angry at him. God is big enough to handle your anger.

But your light will break forth and your peace will come when you give up the questions that have no answers, and reaffirm that even in the midst of confusion, you still trust the God who you know is faithful and good.

## Day Four

How do we cope when God never gives us an answer, and we think he should? The Psalms are of great help to us here, for frequently both David and Asaph expressed their frustration at the lack of answers.

In Psalm 44 David says to the Lord,

*But now you have rejected and humbled us ... You have made us a reproach to our neighbors ... You have made us a byword among the nations ... All this has happened to us, though we had not forgotten you or been false to your covenant ... Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep? ... Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?*

That's an angry man, expressing it openly to God. And at that moment, with no answers to his questions, his anger was vented toward God.

Now, I don't want to imply I think we should yell and scream at God when we please. But I do want to say if you are living with those difficult, unanswered questions, it's okay for you to tell God exactly how you feel about them. Please tell God; he knows your feelings and thoughts anyway, and if you don't ventilate those thoughts, or you try to deny or ignore them, they will turn into bitterness and depression.

Who better to tell than God? He understands you completely, and no one will be fairer or gentler to you than he will be. He didn't chide Martha for her questions. He didn't zap David and Asaph for voicing their anger. And isn't it interesting that all of that is recorded in Scripture for us to read. That's not an accident, you know; it's there to show us how to deal with unanswered questions. So, if the questions and the anger are smoldering inside of you, get alone with God and voice them to him, out loud.

I notice that every time David or Asaph voiced their frustration about their unanswered questions, soon they were led back to that basic trust in God which was the cornerstone of their lives.

One of David's frequent phrases was,

*Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God (Psalm 43:5).*

So, turn to God today with your unanswered questions. Pour them out to him, but then go back to what you know about who God is. Say with David, "I will put my hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

## Day Five

When God hasn't answered your questions, when you can see no justification for what's going on in your life, learn to talk to yourself.

In Psalm 77:7-9 we see an example of Asaph talking to himself. He expressed his rage, saying,

*Will the Lord reject forever?  
Will he never show his favor again?  
Has his unfailing love vanished forever?  
Has his promise failed for all time?  
Has God forgotten to be merciful?*

Then after saying those words of doubt and anger, and I think hearing in his own ears how foolish they were, Asaph said, in Psalm 77:10-12,

*Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:  
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.  
I will remember the deeds of the Lord;  
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.  
I will consider all your works  
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."*

Asaph got the foolish, angry words out of his mouth, expressing to his understanding and patient God all his anger and frustration. And then he changed his thinking and started remembering all that God had done.

Ah, there's our answer, friends. Renewing our minds with correct thinking about who God is and what he has done for us. Just as Asaph needed to get back to who Jehovah God is and what he had done, so we must as well.

When the questions have no answers, you may have to abandon them or be willing to live with the unanswered questions. But you don't have to live in despair or anger; the same God who for whatever reason does not answer your questions is the God who will bring you comfort and strength to face them.

I often think of the question Jesus asked his disciples when many of his followers were forsaking him.

*"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the twelve.  
Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:67-68).*

Friends, where else will you go with your unanswered questions? If there are no answers from God, then trust him to see you through. There's a song I like a great deal, which says, "God is too wise to be mistaken, God is too good to be unkind. So, when you can't understand, when you don't see his plan, when you can't trace his hand, trust his heart." And that's what I would leave you with today. When you can't see why he's doing what he's doing, you can still trust his goodness and his love for you. When you can't trace his hand, trust his heart.