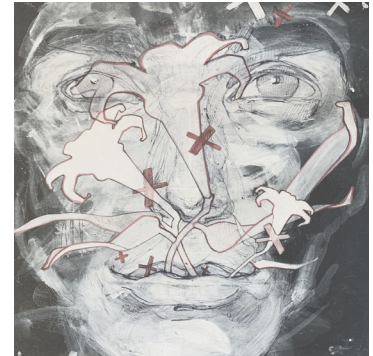


Session 5

Easter Sunday: “When will my prayers be answered?”



A note to leaders:

Welcome to the final part of The Unanswered Prayer Course! Thank you for all the hard work and prayer you've put into running these sessions.

Today's discussion is one of the most important. The previous four have focused on qualities such as honesty and empathy, lament and trust, but today's can be summed up in just one word: hope. On Easter Sunday we find the ultimate answer to all our unanswered prayers in the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and in the firm hope of his return.

As this is the final session of the course, you might like to point people towards the additional resources listed at the end of these guides, as well as the extensive archive available in the 'toolshed' at www.prayercourse.org

1. Introduce the session

5 minutes

Key verses

“Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.” – John 20:19-20

Introduction

Welcome to session 5 of The Prayer Course II: Unanswered Prayer!

Today we've reached the end of our journey, which culminates in the joy of Easter Sunday, the resurrection of Jesus. We'll be asking one final, hope-filled question, "When' – When will my prayers be answered?"

Begin the session by asking someone to open in prayer

2. Watch the video

30 minutes

Bible passages from the session

John 20:19-20, 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Key points

(for your reference in case people need a little prompting!)

- There can be a beauty in our brokenness
- Our deepest suffering can become our greatest gift to the world.
- Our ultimate hope as Christians is eternal

"Now, we see the harvest. We can reap this harvest because [the missionaries Mark and Gladys Bliss] planted the seeds in Iran with their tears and their sacrifice" - Ladan Nouri

3. Discussion questions

30 - 45 minutes

- Q.** What did you find most helpful, inspiring or challenging in what Pete and Sammy Greig, Gemma Hunt and Ladan Nouri?

The Bible says that we 'do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.' (1 Thess. 4:13).

- Q.** Thinking about an area of long-term disappointment in your life, how might an eternal perspective reframe the way you relate to it?
- Q.** What do you think the new heaven and the new earth will be like? How will it be different? How will it be the same?
- Q.** In the video Pete and Sammy Greig used a kintsugi bowl to illustrate the beauty that can come out of brokenness. Where can you see beauty coming out of brokenness in your life, or in the life of someone in this group?

- Q.** The story of Ladan and the missionaries Mark and Gladys Bliss demonstrates that it can sometimes take months, years or even decades for fruit to come out of our suffering.

Are there stories in our community's history of how challenges and trials have now produced fruit? Or are there opportunities for us to turn our current challenges into long-term fruit?

- Q.** Eugene Peterson writes, "Faith develops out of the most difficult aspects of our existence, not the easiest." How do the stories you've heard across this course reflect and inspire you to keep persevering in the midst of challenges?
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4. Small group prayer

15 minutes

Leader's note

If your group is more than 3 people, we would recommend splitting into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to give everyone an opportunity to share and pray for one another. Explain how much time you will have for prayer, and roughly how much time each person will have for sharing and praying.

Ask one another

- Q.** How are you feeling about the things we've discussed today? Are there any areas in which you'd appreciate prayer?
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5. Closing comments

5 minutes

Share with the group what you've really appreciated about the session.

Congratulations! We've made it through the Unanswered Prayer Course! There are additional resources on the Prayer Course website (www.prayercourse.org) to help you continue your journey through the topics that we've explored together.

If you'd like to go deeper and you haven't already done so, there are 3 things you can do next:

1. Read God on Mute
2. Work through the forty day devotional at the end of God on Mute
3. Download the Lectio 365 app from 24-7 Prayer to pray and read the Bible each day with Pete Greig and the team.

You can find out more about the 24-7 Prayer movement at 24-7prayer.com. and you can access Pete Greig's other books and teaching at petegreig.info

Closing prayer

As we finish this course, we'll pray an ancient apostolic blessing over us from the book of Romans. It speaks about the power of the Holy Spirit as the one who renews us with hope, so you may like to open your hands now to receive afresh:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." – Romans 15:13

Further resources & reflection

Journaling question

What has God spoken, revealed, or shared with me through this journey? What does this mean that I need to do now?

Reflect on...

Take time to pause reflect on The Incredulity of Saint Thomas by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (available online at www.caravaggio.org/the-incredulity-of-saint-thomas.jsp)

Books

- Surprised by Hope, Tom Wright
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou
- Dirty Glory, Pete Greig
- How to Pray, Pete Greig