

When Nothing Happens

WHAT WE FOUND

- In the parable commonly identified as the only one unique to St. Mark, the farmer scatters seed and then sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed grows, and the text says twice that the growth is not his doing.
- The phrase to keep is in the middle of verse 27: **he knows not how**. The hiddenness is not a failure of attention. It is the parable's point, in the Lord's own words.
- Isaiah 55:11 promises that God's word accomplishes God's purpose. It does not promise it accomplishes yours, or that it happens in your lifetime, or that you will see it. It is still enormous read exactly as it stands.
- St. Luke tells us the point of the persistent widow before he tells the story: that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. And it ends by asking whether the Son of man will find faith on earth.
- Abraham waited twenty-five years. Isaiah was sent to a people who would hear without understanding and see without perceiving. Jeremiah preached for four decades and the city fell exactly as he had said. None of them could measure by visible results, though the three differ: Abraham received Isaac, Jeremiah saw his warning come true, and only Isaiah was told in advance what to expect.
- The Church prays that no one be lost. She teaches that God predestines no one to hell. She has canonized saints and has never once declared that any particular person is in hell.
- So you may hope, seriously and with your whole heart, for any particular person. You may not claim to know. Absent a canonization, anyone who claims to know has gone past what the Church says.
- "God is working in ways you cannot see" cannot be disproved. Neither can "nothing will ever happen," and that one is a claim about another person's future that nobody has access to. Keep the distinction clean, though: what is at issue is observable change, not anybody's final salvation.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | St. Teresa of Ávila, and a prayer traditionally hers

A short prayer is traditionally known as St. Teresa of Ávila's bookmark: let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you; all things are passing; God alone suffices; patience obtains all things.

The attribution is traditional, and the provenance details often repeated with it are not independently verified here, so present it as the prayer traditionally known as her bookmark rather than as a line from her writings. Either way, notice what it does not say. It does not say that what you are waiting for will arrive. It says that patience obtains, and that God is enough.

St. Teresa of Ávila, the prayer traditionally known as her bookmark. Traditional attribution, offered as such; the provenance details are not independently verified here.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | Pope Benedict XVI on what hope is not

Pope Benedict XVI opened his encyclical on hope with St. Paul's phrase that in hope we were saved, and argued that Christian hope is not optimism about how things will turn out, nor a calculation of probabilities, but a present reality resting on someone who is trustworthy.

That distinction is the whole module in a sentence. What you have is not a forecast about the person you are praying for. It is a relationship with the one you are praying to, and the difference is what makes it survivable over decades.

Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi (2007), especially the opening paragraphs. Document-level citation; paragraph numbers should be verified before publication.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH | Pope St. Paul VI on the fatigue itself

In the closing section of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, on the spirit in which evangelization must be carried out, Pope St. Paul VI names the obstacle directly: a lack of fervour that shows itself in fatigue and disenchantment, in weariness, and in the loss of interior joy, and he treats it as a serious matter rather than a mood.

It is worth knowing that a pope wrote about this exact condition in a document about evangelization, and put it at the end rather than the beginning, where it belongs.

Pope St. Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi 80 (1975). Section-level citation.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

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The next two years. Keep going, and stop measuring the wrong thing.

- Keep praying for them by name, daily. Nothing in this module reduces that.
- Keep the list. Add to it when something happens, even something you would normally dismiss. Two years of small entries reads very differently from two years of memory.
- Put the review date in your calendar tonight, not tomorrow.
- Once this week, say out loud to God the honest thing, unfiltered. Habakkuk opened his book with lament and complaint and was not rebuked for it.
- And ask one honest question: is there anything I have done in this relationship that needs an apology rather than more prayer?
- **If what surfaced tonight was heavier than discouragement, tell somebody this week.** Sustained hopelessness is worth talking to a doctor or a counsellor about, and not only to a priest.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how."

Mark 4:27

GOING FURTHER

Keep the list and add to it. Put the review date in your calendar. And if what surfaced tonight was heavier than discouragement, tell somebody this week; sustained hopelessness is worth talking to a doctor or a counsellor about and not only a priest.

CATECHISM REFERENCES

- **CCC 1058.** The Church prays that no one should be lost.
- **CCC 1037.** God predestines no one to hell.
- **CCC 1821.** We hope for the glory of heaven promised to those who love God and do his will, and the Church prays for all to be saved.
- **CCC 2090-2092.** Hope, and the two sins against it, in the Catechism's own terms.
- **CCC 2725.** Prayer is a battle.