

Where's God When I Need Him Most?

By Counsellor James Kofi Abbrey

*Executive Director and Principal Counsellor
Holistic Counselling & Coaching Institute*

**"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
Psalm 46:1**

Introduction: The Cry of a Hurting Heart

There are seasons in life when the heart cries quietly, "Lord, where are You?" These are not always words of unbelief. Sometimes they are words of pain, confusion, grief, disappointment, or exhaustion. A person may still love God, still pray, still attend church, still believe the Bible, yet inwardly wonder why God seems silent when life is hardest.

This question is not strange to Scripture. David cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" in Psalm 22:1. Jesus Himself repeated those words on the cross in Matthew 27:46. Job searched for God in his suffering. Habakkuk questioned why injustice seemed to continue while God appeared silent. Even the disciples, caught in a storm while Jesus slept in the boat, asked, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Mark 4:38.

The question, "Where's God when I need Him most?" is not a sinful question when it comes from a wounded heart seeking understanding. It can become the beginning of deeper faith, honest prayer, and healing.

1. God Is Present Even When He Seems Silent

One of the hardest lessons in the walk of faith is learning that God's silence is not the same as God's absence. There are times God does not answer in the way we expect, at the time we desire, or through the method we prefer. Yet He remains near.

Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." God is not only present when the testimony comes. He is present in the trouble itself. He is not only God of the breakthrough. He is God in the valley, God in the waiting room, God in the sickbed, God in the tears, God in the lonely night, and God in the unanswered questions.

Sometimes we are looking for God in the dramatic, but He is present in quiet sustaining grace.

2. God May Be Working Behind the Scenes

When Joseph was thrown into the pit, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned, it may have looked as though God had abandoned him. But years later, Joseph looked back and said to his brothers, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." Genesis 50:20.

Joseph did not understand everything while he was in the pit or prison. Understanding came later. Many times, we only see the pain, but God sees the process. We see delay, but God sees preparation. We see rejection, but God sees redirection. We see a closed door, but God sees protection.

Could it be that God is not absent, but arranging things beyond what you can currently see?

3. God Is Near to the Brokenhearted

Pain can make a person feel spiritually alone. Grief, betrayal, depression, disappointment, sickness, and family struggles can make the heart feel abandoned. But Scripture says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm 34:18.

God does not despise broken people. He moves close to them. The brokenhearted may not always feel strong faith, but they can still be held by strong grace.

There are times when God's presence is not felt emotionally, but it is still real spiritually. Feelings are important, but they are not always accurate indicators of God's nearness. A cloudy day does not mean the sun has disappeared. It only means the clouds are hiding what is still there.

4. God Sometimes Strengthens Before He Delivers

Many people want God to remove the pain immediately. That is understandable. But sometimes God first gives strength to endure before He changes the situation.

Paul prayed three times for his thorn in the flesh to be removed. God answered him, not by removing it immediately, but by saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9.

This does not mean God enjoys our pain. It means His grace can sustain us even when the problem remains. Sometimes the miracle is not that the storm stops immediately. Sometimes the miracle is that we are still standing in the storm.

5. God Is With Us Through People

Sometimes we pray for God to come, but we reject the people He sends. God often ministers through human hands, compassionate voices, wise counsel, medical help, pastoral care, family support, and trusted friends.

Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." When someone sits with you, listens without judging, prays with you, supports you, or helps you take the next step, God may be showing His care through that person.

This is why the church must become a community of compassion, not condemnation. People who are suffering do not need quick religious slogans. They need presence, patience, prayer, truth, and love.

6. God Understands Suffering Personally

Christianity does not present a God who is distant from pain. In Jesus Christ, God entered human suffering. He knew rejection, betrayal, grief, exhaustion, temptation, false accusation, physical pain, and death.

Hebrews 4:15 reminds us that we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses. This means when you suffer, you are not talking to a God who cannot understand. Jesus understands tears. Jesus understands loneliness. Jesus understands betrayal. Jesus understands what it means to cry out in pain.

At the cross, God did not stand far away from suffering. He entered it.

7. God's Timing Is Not Always Our Timing

One of the most difficult parts of faith is waiting. We may ask, "Why now?" "Why me?" "Why this delay?" "Why has God not answered yet?" Isaiah 55:8-9 reminds us that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours. This does not remove the pain, but it reminds us that our understanding is limited.

Lazarus was sick, and Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus. But Jesus delayed. By the time He arrived, Lazarus had died. Martha said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." John 11:21. That statement sounds very much like, "Where were You when we needed You most?"

Yet Jesus was not late. He was working according to a greater purpose. He wept with them, then raised Lazarus. The delay did not mean denial. The silence did not mean indifference.

8. God Invites Honest Prayer

God is not offended by honest prayer. He would rather receive your honest tears than your empty religious performance. The Psalms are full of lament. Lament is a faithful way of bringing pain before God. It says, "Lord, I do not understand, but I am still talking to You."

You can pray: "Lord, I feel alone, but I know You promised never to leave me. Lord, I am tired, but I ask for strength for today. Lord, I do not understand this season, but help me trust You one step at a time. Lord, show me where You are in this pain."

This kind of prayer is not weakness. It is faith under pressure.

9. God May Be Forming Something Deep Within You

Romans 5:3-5 teaches that suffering can produce perseverance, character, and hope. This does not mean suffering is good in itself, but God can bring good out of it.

Some lessons are not learned on the mountaintop. Some are learned in the valley. Compassion is often deepened through pain. Wisdom is often shaped through testing. Faith is often purified through waiting.

The person who has suffered with God can become a healer to others. Your pain, when surrendered to God, can become part of your ministry, testimony, and maturity.

10. God Has Not Finished Your Story

The cross looked like defeat on Friday, but resurrection came on Sunday. Between Friday and Sunday, it looked as if darkness had won. But God was not finished.

Your present pain is not the final chapter. Your disappointment is not the end of your story. Your tears are not wasted before God.

Psalm 30:5 says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The night may feel long, but morning still belongs to God.

Practical Reflections for Personal Meditation

When you feel God is far away, pause and ask: What am I expecting God to do, and could He be working differently? Who has God placed around me as a channel of support? What promise of Scripture can I hold onto today? What is one small faithful step I can take, even while I wait? Have I allowed my pain to silence my prayer, or can I bring the pain honestly to God?

A Word of Encouragement

God is not absent because you are hurting. God is not angry because you are weak. God is not far because you have questions. He is near, even when your emotions cannot feel Him.

When you need Him most, He may be closer than you think. He may be sustaining you quietly. He may be protecting you unseen. He may be preparing a testimony you cannot yet imagine.

Isaiah 41:10 says, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God." That is the comfort of the believer: not that life will never hurt, but that we will never face life without God.

Conclusion

Where is God when you need Him most? He is in the fire with the Hebrew boys. He is in the prison with Joseph. He is in the storm with the disciples. He is in the valley with David. He is at the tomb with Mary and Martha. He is at the cross with the suffering world. He is with you now.

You may not see His hand clearly, but you can trust His heart.

Selected Scripture References

Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 4:38; Psalm 46:1; Genesis 50:20; Psalm 34:18; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 55:8-9; John 11:21; Romans 5:3-5; Psalm 30:5; Isaiah 41:10.