

# Jesus' Unanswered Prayer

**Matthew 26:39** He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

- There is no answer from Heaven to this prayer of Jesus. In fact, Jesus prayed this and then listened for over an hour. And He did that 3 times with no answer.
  - **Matthew 26:44** So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.
- We have probably all experienced something like this in our own prayer lives.

**What does it mean when this happens?**

**Five observations from this unanswered prayer of Jesus:**

## **1. God's mind can be changed**

- Jesus would not have prayed this prayer if He knew that God never altered His plans. Jesus did not pray worthless or futile prayers.
  - **Genesis 18:16-32** Abraham intercedes for the city of Sodom
  - **Jonah 3:1-10** Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. <sup>4</sup> And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup> So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. <sup>6</sup> Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup> And he caused it to be proclaimed and published

throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. <sup>8</sup> But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup> Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? <sup>10</sup> Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

- We see times in the Bible when God allows something or does something in answer to prayer.
- But we also see times when He does not change or alter His plans. Most notably, here with Jesus praying concerning the cross.

## **2. Silence from heaven does not indicate you are out of God's will or God is displeased with you**

- Was Jesus out of God's will? Was God displeased with Jesus?
- I doubt strongly that Jesus believed either of those things, even when He received no answer to His prayer.
- Flat earth perception – The difference perspective makes.
- **Romans 8:35-39** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." <sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - Pauls' perspective – even unanswered prayer does not separate us.
  - But how do we feel when something is trying to separate us?

- **Ephesians 2:4-5** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
  - No matter what we feel, we must choose to believe the truth. God never leaves us. We are united with Christ. That is truth. Do not fall for an emotional lie.

### 3. It doesn't mean I am less of a Christian

- Jesus was not less Christ-like in the garden.
- **2 Corinthians 12:8-9** Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- **1 Kings 18:1** And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.”
- David – Why have you forsaken me? Psalm 22
- It can be very tempting to be jealous of someone else that says God spoke to them, or they had an answered prayer during a time of silence from God.
- Resist that temptation.
- Unanswered prayer, or silence from Heaven is not an indication of your relationship with God. In fact, I would suggest that God is more likely to answer someone that needs correcting much quicker than someone continually pressing in.

### 4. Just because something gets hard does not mean God changed His mind.

- Abraham was told to kill his child.
- Paul was told he must suffer for the Kingdom
- David had to fight a giant and got no support from the army.

Difficult circumstances are not an indication of God's will. God often calls us to do things that are beyond our own ability.

- **2 Corinthians 4:7-11** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. <sup>8</sup> *We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— <sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

##### **5. Unanswered prayer does not mean we are alone.**

- God was still with Jesus throughout the crucifixion. In fact, it wasn't until Jesus took on the sin of the world that He ever felt alone, when He said Why have You forsaken Me?
- **Deuteronomy 31:8** And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."
- **Hebrews 13:5** Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."
- **Do not mistake God not giving an answer with God leaving you.**

## What do we do when we get no answer?

- What was Jesus doing before this prayer time in the garden?
- **Matthew 26:1-2** Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples,<sup>2</sup> “You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”
- He was preparing to go to the cross

**Side note - Matthew 26:3-5** Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,<sup>4</sup> and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*.<sup>5</sup> But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

- The enemies of Jesus said do not kill Him during the feast.
- When was Jesus crucified? During Passover – the feast!
- God can do anything!

What was Jesus doing after the prayer time?

- **Matthew 26:45-46** Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.<sup>46</sup> Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”
- Jesus was still preparing to go to the cross

Also, keep praying.

## 2 ideas I have about unanswered prayers.

1. God has already told you what to do. You don't need to keep asking. But it's ok. Like Jesus in the Garden.
2. God is just delaying for whatever reason. Like Paul asking about the thorn in his flesh. Persistence is key.