

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



The Frustrating Silence Of God

Isaiah 55:8-9

Sunday, September 27, 2026

If God is a good Father, why do sincere prayers for healing, rescue, or provision sometimes go unanswered? We often wonder if we prayed the wrong way. We wonder if our faith failed. We wonder if God is angry with us.

But the Bible is deeply honest. It does not pretend that every prayer gets the exact answer we want. God's silence does not mean He is holding back, and it does not mean your faith is deficient. We must look deeply at what Scripture actually says about God's will.

THE PROBLEM OF OUR DESIRES

To understand this theological truth, we must first look at our own hearts. Sometimes, we ask for things that feed our pride or our comfort. We might not even realize we are doing it. But the Bible speaks clearly about this human flaw.

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ESV

Sometimes our desires limit us because they are self-centered. We cannot always see the long-term results of what we want. What we are convinced is a good thing to have could very well turn out to be something that will lead us to a destructive end. Like a hiker lost in a dense forest, we only see the trees right in front of us. Deciding to take what appears to be the right path could result in a crisis. God sees the entire map.

When a request is really about our own ego, our own comfort, or our desire to control the world around us, God lovingly denies our requests. He does not always hand us the thing that would feed our wrong appetites. If He gave us everything we asked for the moment we asked for it, we might easily lose our way. His refusal to answer a selfish prayer is actually an act of grace.

OUR DESIRES VS GOD'S WILL

Prayer is not a magic spell to force God's hand. It is not a vending machine where you put in a coin and get what you want. Instead, it is a way to connect our hearts to His ultimate plan. The apostle John explains this concept.

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. NIV

Our prayers must tie into what God is already doing. Our prayers are anchored to what God desires, not primarily what we want. His will is always good, even when we cannot see how. God's mind is far beyond ours.

Isaiah 55:8-9

My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, says the Lord. And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. NLT

Because God sees the end from the beginning, He knows what is truly best for our souls.

In Exodus 33, Israel had just sinned by building the golden calf. They broke their promise to God. In his exhaustion, Moses went up Mount Sinai and asked God for something very bold. He said, "Please show me your glory." He wanted to see God's full substance, His real nature. But the Lord knew that a human could not see His full glory and live. God did not make the sky flash with lightning. Instead, He placed Moses in the hollow cleft of a rock as He passed by.

He gave Moses exactly what he needed to keep going, but He protected Moses from what would destroy him. God answered the cry of Moses' heart, but in a way that fit God's perfect wisdom. Then, the Lord spoke His true name and declared the core of His nature. He provided a better answer than Moses even asked for.

We see this same pattern in the New Testament with the Apostle Paul. He faced a very difficult struggle with a "thorn in his flesh."

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. NLT

Paul begged the Lord to remove his suffering. He exercised faith and sincerity, but God gave him a clear and direct "no." Did Paul's faith fail? No. Was God angry with Paul? Not at all.

10 That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. NLT

God allowed the pain to stay because it kept Paul humble. God provided His daily grace, which was much better than just removing the problem. God's silent or unexpected answers force us to lean entirely on His strength instead of our own.

Imagine a mother whose young son has a deep cut on his arm. The boy begs her to leave the cut alone because touching it hurts. If the mother grants his request, the wound will likely get infected. Instead, she holds his arm firmly and cleans the cut with stinging medicine. The boy feels ignored and hurt in that moment. He thinks his mother is not listening. She is certainly not ignoring him; she is providing exactly what he needs to heal. It feels painful to the child, but it is an act of deep love from the parent.

Conclusion

Silence from God does not automatically mean your faith failed. It does not mean God is angry. Often, it means the answer is coming in a form you cannot see yet. God might be building your character. He might be protecting you from unseen danger. Sometimes He is providing something better than what was requested.