When God Doesn't Answer

Matthew 26:36-46

What the cross teaches us when prayers go unanswered. This is what Jesus was confronted with in the garden. He was praying, but there was no response.

A quiet kind of heartbreak happens when you've prayed… and nothing changes. You fasted. You believed. You stayed up late asking God to move, and still, the door didn't open. The diagnosis didn't shift. The relationship didn't heal. And if you've ever been there, you know the feeling: it's not just disappointment—it's a shaking of the soul.

If we are honest, most of us place our hope in outcomes. We say we trust God, but what we trust is the belief that He'll do what we want. We think, *"If I pray hard enough, believe deeply enough, live righteously enough—God will answer."* And when He doesn't, our trust crumbles. We whisper things like, *"I guess God doesn't care,"* or *"Maybe He's not listening after all."* I wonder what Jesus was thinking.

But what if that kind of hope, one based on results, isn't the kind God offers? What if there's a deeper, steadier, unshakable hope rooted not in what we want, but in who God is?

Gethsemane is where hope and silence meet. Where the omnipotence observes the behavior of humanity and feels no obligation to answer.

Let me take you to the garden of Gethsemane. There, Jesus prayed a prayer that went unanswered. "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me…" (Matthew 26:39). He prayed three times. And heaven was silent.

There was no rescue. No escape hatch. No angelic intervention to carry Him away. And yet, from that unanswered prayer came the greatest miracle of all—our salvation.

At the cross, God didn't give Jesus relief—He gave Him resurrection. And that is where the God kind of hope is born—not in the moment we get our way, but in the moment we trust His.

This is what we must understand: *God's silence is not God's absence*. And *God's "no" is not God's rejection*. When Jesus submitted to the Father's will—"Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done"—He opened the door to a kind of victory we would not have considered possible in that kind of circumstance.

We must be careful that our hope is built on who not what. We don't talk about it enough, but many of us only trust God when we understand Him. When things are going well. When the plan makes sense. But Lent, and especially the cross, tells another story.

It reminds us that God is trustworthy even when life doesn't make sense. Real hope, God's hope, isn't built on what we can see. It's built on His character. Isaiah 55:8 says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." That's not a verse to brush off confusion. It's an invitation to rest in God's higher wisdom. It is built on Matthew 28:20b "Remember I am with you each and every day until the end of the age." If your trust is in outcomes, you'll be shaken. But if your trust is in God's love, God's faithfulness, God's purpose—then even in pain, your hope will hold.

We must remember that pain is not the end of the story. Suffering is not the end of the story; rejection is not the end of the story.

If you're in a season of fear, pain, or silence, hear me. Because this is for you: Suffering always has a story. We may not want it to be told. We may not want to experience the entire chapter. But God has not forgotten you. The cross is your proof. Because Jesus suffered too.

He was rejected. Betrayed. Mocked. Left alone. He felt every ache of abandonment. He cried out, "Why have You forsaken Me?" and still, He trusted. This is the hope of the cross: Jesus did not run from suffering. He met it head-on. And in doing so, He made a way for us to walk through our *own* Gethsemanes with purpose.

Lent doesn't rush to Resurrection morning. It walks slowly through the dark valleys—through the silence of unanswered prayers, the weight of waiting, the ache of surrender. But all of it leads to resurrection.

The resurrection didn't erase the cross. When Jesus rose from the grave, He didn't just prove His power, He proved His love.

That's why Hebrews 6:19 says, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Anchors don't stop the storm, but they keep the boat from drifting. And hope does the same for your soul.

Remember you're not alone, and your hope is not in vain.

The cross tells us that God does His deepest work in the darkest places.

So let your hope rest in this: Not that God will always do what you want.

But He will always do what is best.

Blessings,

Pastor Gool