

2 Missing Ingredients of Answered Prayer

by Shane Idleman

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Scripture: Isaiah 64:1, Deuteronomy 28:1, 2 Timothy 2:4, Isaiah 59:1, Lamentations 3:21, Matthew 17:21

Topics: "Unanswered Prayers", "Spiritual Breakthrough"

Description

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Transcript

Back wish they could get God to hear some of their prayers And we're going to talk about that all week, but the title is when the heavens are brass When the heavens are brass two missing ingredients of answered prayer How many of you heard that that saying heavens are brass is it most of you or not many of you? Oh, you haven't okay? Well, it's an old saying that people would say you know the heavens are brass God's not answering my prayers my prayer It's almost like heavens. It's hitting a wall It's made of a brass and it actually comes from Deuteronomy I'm going to talk about that in a minute But I thought a good way to kind of begin the night is to explain The whole premise for what we're doing here and the scripture is from Isaiah. Oh God would you rend the heavens? Would you rend the heavens basically would you rip open the heavens and come down and that is actually a prayer Isaiah is praying.

Oh God would you rend the heavens so we come here again, and we pray Oh, God, would you rend the heavens and so we see here from Isaiah? There's a there's a desperation There's there and I want to be careful on my language here because God does whatever he wants whenever he wants however he wants But there's something special about a heart of desperation There's something that God hears the cries of his children that the desperate cries the seeking yearning the drawing closer to the the passionate pursuit of God and Once you once you can get that and lay hold of that you begin to just experience a mighty move of his Holy Spirit and Then also from rend the heavens When God does open the heavens

what it does it nourishes it restores it replenishes It revives and the verse goes on to say Oh God would even the mountains shake in your presence So when God comes down and he rips open the heavens even the mountains Shake in the holy presence of God and that atmosphere believe it or not a church can experience That type of atmosphere not to the degree where there's mountains shaking necessarily We are close to the San Andreas fault line by the way, but there there's a there's a The presence of God we desire the presence and power of God the anointing of God to come and just just touch our lives in a very tangible and real way and throughout church history God has done that before and We're just going to keep pursuing. We're going to keep seeking we're going to keep plowing that soil and we believe that God will answer the prayers of his people and So where does this come from when the heavens are brass? Deuteronomy 28 Now I should set it up because at the beginning Before Deuteronomy 28. It's a setting up of the nation of Israel and God is kind of laying out What he wants for his people and here it says now it shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God if you Diligently now that word diligence is interesting in the Hebrew language picture it like a like a Drop of water Hitting a rock for a long time.

Eventually it would create a Divot in that rock even a rock It's that diligence and that diligence and as a river runs over rock and different things smooths it out Not not right away. There's a it's a it's a diligence and if we can get that back in our Christian walk I think we can really experience mighty moves of God's Spirit and that diligence He is a rewarder of those who sometimes seek him. I kind of say the wrong thing sometimes to see who's paying attention He's a rewarder of those who? Diligently seek him.

It's in that diligence. It's even in that Lord. I don't feel like it I don't want to take a poll right now, but how many of you are here even though you didn't feel like coming.

Oh There's a lot more than okay Let's try that again, I mean you would be surprised to know that many of us too in leadership or Worship team. It's you have a hard day. You don't want to be there You're not in a good mood things are going it's challenging and you just something the flesh doesn't want to go there But it's in that diligence and and even when I don't feel like it even when I don't want to be there Even when I don't see the results even when I'm praying for my kids and they're not going forward They're going reverse even though I'm praying for calm in my home.

It's not getting calm It's getting louder, even though all hell seems to be breaking loose There's something about that perseverance and that pushing in and that desperation that diligence Anything in life worth having takes diligence if you diligently a boy obey the voice of the Lord What does it mean to obey his voice to observe? Carefully all his commandments which I command you today and he goes over a whole list of different things Therefore the nation of Israel, but they the the principle is still relevant for us today the power of diligence Devoted what does that word mean devoted and painstaking work an application to accomplish an undertaking In other words, I'm going to finish this I'm going to complete this even in the midst of adversity and difficulties And that's what we do every time we do rend the heavens is we have I have to be here every night Pastor Abram other we have to it's that diligence. We're gonna make this work. We're gonna keep focusing on God and keep seeking God And then it goes on to say that the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth so Of course, this is for the nation of Israel as they begin to avoid Obey the voice of God God begins to set them high above all the nations of the earth And it's actually interesting our founding fathers quoted scriptures like this in America they would said they want to be a city upon a hill and that they understood the blessings of God were were a by-product of obeying God's voice and All these blessings shall come upon you and they will actually overtake you Don't you love when the blessings of God will overtake you now, let's get out of our mind

here.

He's talking about bling-bling For the young adults and the kids all these new words come out. It's hard to keep keep keep up to speed with them But it really you know, obviously that follows obviously financial blessings do occur from time to time Sometimes they don't like Paul said I learned to be comfortable in all settings and let me tell you Having going up and down this rollercoaster road most of my life I will tell you just find enjoyment where God has you there's not the grass is not greener Somebody who's rich is not necessarily more spiritual often. It's the opposite But there is a blessing of God that can follow obedience and that can be on Your marriage on your family the favor of God You know, just just God just covering your home and and the provision He never says I will give you everything you want But your needs Those needs God sees our needs and so obedience is very powerful Obrey obedience brings the favor of God and then verse 15, but it shall come to pass.

Oh, here's the negative It shall come to pass if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God To observe carefully all his commandments and his statutes Which I command you today that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you Now sometimes people have trouble with this but we have to realize that God's voice his principles what they act like is guard rails through the canyons of life They don't prevent you from enjoying life. They prevent you from falling off the cliff And so if you all God just doesn't want me to have fun. God's a killjoy Really what he's doing is he's setting here's the boundaries if you stay within these boundaries Here's going to be the blessings that will occur Once he once he set truth into motion, he can't reverse he can't change his mind He can't what that would be almost lying and saying one thing and doing another I sometimes think of God You know, obviously it portrays him as a father and he says to us, you know son This is this is the best way Listen to my voice.

Listen to my voice. This is the best best path. Listen to it And don't stray to the left or the right when you when you obey that voice the blessings the favor of God will overshadow you Overcome you from financial to finding employment to house issues marriage issues health issues Oftentimes it doesn't relieve us of trouble, of course, but there's favor in that There's there's that the blessings of God, you know it I'm preaching to the choir many times I know but you know when God's favor is upon you and you know when his his Banking paddle is on you as well that that discipline those he loves he disciplines He disciplines those he loves and then verse 23 and your heavens So here's what's going to happen not only are the curses I mean if you watch Hollywood, you're gonna have a different definition of a curse and what a Blessing Is God's favor upon you his his his it's a merit to grace his blessing He's he's he's got your back and you feel the blessings of God the shelter of God But when you step outside of that boundary the curse then it's not God cursing you You actually walk outside of that boundary outside of that safety net and protection and then you open yourself up to These things that are not good and not godly and so God I want to bless you He says the children of Israel with rain and produce and prosperity But if you disobey me, you're going to remove yourself from those blessings And so that's really what a curse is.

It's the opposite I want to bless you, but now I can't because of disobedience so now these things are going to come upon you that are the opposite of the blessing and your heavens are Over that are over your head shall be bronze. I love what the the King James says in thy heaven That is over thy head shall be brass So that's where that famous saying comes from the heavens are brass and in this context What did their people rely on more than anything else They were farmers they planted seeds hmm Open the heavens and let it rain Rain, he was always in control of the rain and thank God for his control of the rain I mean we were close to a drought until you look at Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevadas right now. It's like Wow downpour Downpour of his of his and that's what it's the whole process of grabbing that over the

ocean and and those that water and the Taking it into the land and and it just even that speaks of a creator if you could go through that whole process Of how that works and and so that's what opening heaven would mean they would plant the seeds all of their Their livelihood was dependent upon it whether they would starve whether they would have enough for their family their produce Everything depended on the rain no rain no food no produce and so God would close the heavens so a lack of rain the lack of Abundance would be the result of disobedience Now the parallels are amazing Because although sometimes the rain doesn't stop the the production in our life will stop The produce the Necessities that we you might find yourself in a difficult situation any anyone been there or God might take that job from you God might take that that that that that financial blessing from you and now it's difficulties and now there's challenges and The heavens are like brass.

God's not answering my prayers. Everything seems to be falling apart Now that's not always because of disobedience That's why it's hard sometimes with Christianity as some as people put blanket statements over everything Oh, you're just you just don't have enough faith you there must be sin in your life And that was a big part, especially in the 1980s and 90s I hope it's corrected itself in the what they call the faith movement they would tell people you're just not healed because you don't have enough faith there must be sin in your life and It would really it hurt a lot of people over the years I've read books on in story It's like amazing how wrong we can we can misunderstand God's Word But with all things there's a little bit of truth in there as well Because without faith, it's impossible to please God Jesus said if you have faith is a must receive There's there's faith involved in believing and trusting God And and so we see that that dichotomy in Scripture of finding that healthy balance So God said the heavens will be brass Over your head and the earth which is under you shall be iron Have you ever tried planting anything on top of a concrete slab? No, you won't be able to and that's what this this picture is that nothing will be productive And that's that's how God really judged the nation of Israel. That's how God would judge His people Stop the produce stop the blessing stop the abundance and then also bring in the armies whether it's a Syrians Babylonians all these different Egyptians to go in and judge God's people that tear of these nations and God would give them over to their enemies It's interesting when they were on God's side.

No enemy could stop them They were they trembled at the name of Yahweh From Gideon going in and hearing that everyone is scared of Yahweh and and the cities and Jericho No, nothing could stop God Almighty. It was like a steamroller that couldn't be stopped until the people begin to Become apathetic and disobey and that's really what has happened to our nation in the last, you know hundred years or so 1940s 50s 60s you see the decline Of course You see this, you know prayer being removed from the school Ten Commandment monuments being removed from the school the legalization of abortion you see all kinds of perversion just beginning to infiltrate our culture and our families and I'm just so thankful that God has stayed that hand of judgment to some degree I mean and I've said this before from up here that we are I believe experiencing one aspect of God's judgment We see, you know, we don't know exactly what that looks like But when God starts to withdraw his favor and now our enemies are are laughing at us Russia China you'd be amazed at what's going on probably behind the scenes and we see the the inflation and the surplus and the virus just changed to another variant and keeps everyone, you know in this in this frenzy and and now God's actually said when I bring pestilence When I bring famine when I bring drought when I allow the enemies could to come in with the sword all these things that are Happening have our have been indications of judgment before on the nation of Israel Now I don't always say America and Israel, you know that that the Old Testament context is Israel for sure But there's overlapping principles that apply to all of us today Paul even said to learn from the Old Testament and don't follow their examples But do do the right things and use them as an example of what not to do so asking God to answer prayer

while in a state of disobedience is like asking a contractor to build a house without a foundation Isaiah 59 12 I'm sorry 59 1 through 2 Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear but your Iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear So we see here another principle again This can happen this can do with salvation in general for sure But it also it tells us that there's there's a sin in our life and there's iniquity and we don't want to give it up But there's a separation that we're praying we're praying God hear my prayer But I don't want to turn from the sin and reconnect that that line of communication So now God's it's almost as if you say hey, listen I want to hear you, but I can't because your sin your iniquity your heart is not clean You're not you're not pursuing me. I can't answer those prayers your sins have hidden his face from you John Rice is a famous Baptist evangelist.

He said there is no way you can please God No way you can have that sweet communion with him to get your prayers answered if you are in rebellion against the known will God Now I'm not going to be apologetic right here, but I'm going to be encouraging because sometimes Everything I'm reading can be seem heavy-handed and to some degree it should be heavy-handed That's how we get convicted. That's how we realize we want to change But you also need to be encouraged because not anyone in this room tonight is perfect I'm not up here going. You know what? There's there's no sin in my life at all.

There's no Nick nothing. I'm just I haven't sinned since 19. What year was that? When did we start this church, let's see That's where you guys got to get you got to get where I'm at And People they sometimes leave here.

I mean if we've had people leave and say man I just chain that's convicting and I don't know if I can ever ever measure up and I want I don't want to leave anyone with that impression. I want to convict them I want to show them that they might be in rebellion to God's will but the same time I want to encourage them to get back into the center of God's will Also, what's interesting about this verse millions if not billions on the planet Earth pray pray to a God every day and It falls on deaf ears Because they've had to have to have that relationship with God or they have to say I don't have a relationship with you I need a relationship with you so often When the heavens are brass the two missing ingredients of answer prayer are repentance and desperation To get prayers answered Often it requires repentance whatever's blocking that that prayer and do you know unforgiveness can block a lot of prayers? Unforget no, I'm not gonna forget that person Lord. I'm not gonna I'm so angry No, I'm just gonna go into my prayer closet pray for this is Lord.

It's what I want. That's what I need I need you to take this away from me. I need the struggles taking me down and no, I'm not gonna forgive I'm not gonna do what God has told me to do and that there's a break in the line of communication in that unrepentant sin But what about if the heavens are brass for other reasons Anybody not getting your prayers answered Let's talk about these briefly timing Timing Lord, are you even hearing my prayers? It seems like nothing is happening.

It's been months. It's been years anybody relate Anybody been praying for years and nothing's happened Well, it could be timing trusting in God's sovereignty and Resting it when I rest in his sovereignty, then it doesn't matter because God knows what's best. It's his timing Also, if the heavens are brass, it means I need to listen more carefully when I can't hear him When I can't hear him when I'm not certain what's going on I press in even more and also we begin to remove the things that are hindering us Because if the prayers aren't being answered and the heavens seem like brass I look at my life a little bit closer to you Like is there a hindrance? Is there something stopping this? Is there something Lord you want me to deal

with and that's why I like 2nd Timothy 2 through 4. It's the amplified Bible.

I Don't use that as a study Bible because it takes a lot of Liberty What it does is it amplifies words that doesn't give just one meaning it kind of opens it up But it's a really interesting a commentary type Bible. No soldier in active service It's what all of you are an active soldier hate to give you the bad news You are in service to God that's why I laugh inside, but I'm outside I'm Crying for them, but it's when people say Shane. I don't want to get involved.

You're already involved It's just what side are you on We have we have that every four years in America. It's called election season I just don't want to get involved. Guess what? You're already involved.

You're already involved. You don't vote you just voted You don't say anything. You just said something silence speaks Volumes the silent pulpits in America speak volumes by not saying something you say Something so you are an active service let your children know you're an active service you can either be MIA missing in action, or you can be a Dishonorably discharged or but you're in service to God as a Christian so he said here no soldier an active service gets entangled and it's the the words the nuances are Kind of like rope tied around your feet and you know You're you're you're trying to walk and it's no nobody in service for God gets entangled in the cares of this life You can't walk effect effectively.

You can't minister. You can't lead a life of glorifying God if you're entangled in what Ordinary business in the affairs of this world of the civilian life. It's a devoted life It's a disciplined life He avoids them so that he may please the one who enlisted him to serve so when So when the heavens are brass Look at this.

Is there anything in your life? That is it is Entangled you're entangled in it and and it's really keeping you away from God and that's why I don't want to do a whole checklist here because God will show each and every one of us if there's something that is that is Holding me back holding you back from all that God wants to do in our life It's an entanglement not necessarily a sin necessarily sometimes a good thing It's not a god thing. Anybody ever been distracted by good things and really at the end you realize okay That was not a god thing that wore me out. That was not productive It was it was it was a good thing and there's there's oh, it's okay to do good things Don't get me wrong but if you find yourself entangled in the snares of this world or The ordinary business of this world take it to the Lord and see what he wants you to remove Brass heavens for another reason would be it's not his will Do you know that we often pray we pray not according to God's will sometimes? Because we want what will make us happy We want what we think is best that job that income level that spouse singles Thank God for unanswered prayers all of us all of us can look back at some point and say thank God for unanswered prayers But at the time we weren't too happy and So it's according to God's will again trusting in his sovereignty And just a side note here.

I think I put it here until you hear otherwise stay the course That question comes in a lot to our websites, what am I supposed to do? I I I don't know what to do. I've been praying to God and and I I'm not certain what to do. Well, don't do anything Unless you have to I mean there's times where you've got to make a decision You've got to fill out the application You've got to make some you know You step out in faith make the decision to the best of your ability But often it's just a waiting time and that waiting time is not wasted time So it's it's a time of just waiting on God and that's why I love that scripture those who wait upon the Lord Shall renew their strength.

It's not necessarily physical strength It's spiritual strength the strength to continue the energy to continue as I wait on God Lord. I'm not hearing from you I don't know what to do right now. I can't do anything right now.

I'm just gonna stay the course I can't change the results. I can't change this situation. I can't change this problem I can't force them to do anything.

I'm just gonna hold the line until I hear otherwise and Then finally, I know it's hard to clap when you're cold and then not finally, but the next it builds faith unanswered prayer builds faith If it what if it was the opposite then Jesus would be like a genie in a bottle That's why I say that so many, you know people think I just want this or a butler go Get me this go get me this go get me this and we have the wrong view of prayer The the right view of prayer is to line up my heart with God's will That I align with God's will not what I want But thy will be done on earth as it is in heavens heaven Give us this day our daily bread and and we we line up with what God is doing So it's not here's what I want. Here's what I want. Now.

You can ask Lord. Is this your will? Well, this is what we'd like to see happen. This is what I want to happen and Lord I'm sensing you're doing this Would you show me and you your prayer changes to all these things you think you need to now focus Lord? what is your will and it builds the faith the longer you press in the more faith is built and Then finally, of course It causes us to press in and press in and press in and press in that pressing in and that that contending for the faith Now we're going to talk about this a little bit more As the week goes on but I talked about it Sunday, but something else that helps Bend the brass is Fasting in prayer.

This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting I talked about Sunday, but there's something unique that happens that that actually bends the brass of heavens there's a there's a self discipline that takes place and we become that we become Disciplined and there's denial and there's separation and there's things that really got when you separate yourself aside for prayer and Fasting it really helps to break open the heavens So I'll leave you with this thought The power of the prayer altar and that's why we're going to open. That's why we open the altar that's why we want to do it again tonight and Often these nights are not like other services most of you can can agree to that on on Sunday we have many onlookers, but not a lot of players You have a lot of people in the stands watching but not a lot of players But when we come together like this, it's more of there's a heart. There's a desperation there They people have if you're mean if you're wanting to come to church for a few hours on a Monday night That's a good sign.

There's a hunger. There's a there's a desire And so I want to put up lamentations and call it timeout and refocus. We need to refocus our hope This I recall to mind therefore I have hope Through the Lord's mercies.

We are not consumed be encouraged tonight through the Lord's mercies We are not consumed because his compassion Fails not they are new every morning great is your faithfulness God? So just just even meditate on that during during this final time of worship that when I have to recall to my mind Because our mind takes us in a not good direction our mind takes us away from the Lord So let's put that scripture up there again just for a minute this I recall to my mind I'm gonna bring this to my recollection and because I recall this therefore I have hope I have hope in what in God And what he's going to do then the Lord's mercies because of the Lord's mercies We are not consumed Have you ever felt consumed like the world is gonna just eat us up and spit us out What's going on on the outside what's going on? And we feel consumed by the perversion feel consumed by the depravity But because of the Lord's mercies his grace being upon us and because it's compassion It doesn't fail. We are not consumed. We are not let down.

We are not destroyed They are new every morning Great is your faithfulness So no matter what you came in here with you with tonight. You can wake up tomorrow morning refreshed restored refocused Recalling to mind just as during this time of worship Remember the goodness of God all of us in here can reflect on the goodness of God what he's brought us through how he is He's he saw us through difficulties and hard seasons And I also want to mention the two missing ingredients again of answer prayer many times there's not repentance or desperation and so again with the altar open just a Dependent repentant desperate heart or maybe those who need or need to intercede you in need to intercede for your kids or for your grandkids One of the number one prayers we get next door for years has been the prodigal son or the prodigal daughter or the grandkids That aren't walking with the Lord. They're following witchcraft.

They think they they've now changed their gender We have to press in and we have

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