

Is There Anything Too Hard for God

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, perseverance, and trust in God, especially during times of discouragement and challenges. It highlights the need to push through in prayer, wait upon God with patience, and trust in His promises, knowing that nothing is too hard for God. The speaker encourages deepening one's relationship with God through prayer, Scripture, and worship, and calls for a renewed hunger for God's presence and power.

Scripture: Jeremiah 32:17, Luke 1:37, Job 42:2, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Matthew 7:7, James 5:16

Topics: "Faith", "Perseverance in Prayer"

Description

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Transcript

Is there anything too hard for God? Robert Seep. He was at this time the president when this quote was released. The president of World Vision.

I think most of you have heard of that. He was once asked if he ever got discouraged. He responded, well, in 1991, I went to Romania and I saw children warehoused in horrific circumstances, and it was the worst thing I had ever seen.

But then I went to Somalia, and I saw 75% of the children under 5 at risk of dying, and many of them died. It was the worst thing I had ever seen. Then I went to Rwanda, and more people died in six weeks than in four years under Nazi occupation in France.

And it was the worst thing I had ever seen. Until I went to Bosnia. And when I went there, I saw torture like I never thought existed.

So yes, I get discouraged. And that is one of the hardest things, I believe, as Christians in our Christian walk. It's not too difficult when you're encouraged, but the challenges come when the discouragement comes.

And like many of you, I didn't want to be here every night sometimes. Can we be a little honest? Maybe some of you do. That's good.

But, you know, we get hit by demonic attacks. We get hit by obstacles. A lot of people this time of year get sick.

And it's a hard season of discouragement. And the tension that we often feel is God can do it, but will He do it? And that really pulls on me a lot, because I know He can. I know He can heal every person I pray for.

I know He can change every situation I pray for. I know He can change this nation. He can change this state.

But will He? And finding that balance, but then realizing is there anything too hard for God? And that really hit home with me this week because we all know the answer, of course, is no. But, we get trapped in thinking that some things maybe are. Even though we won't say it, we're like, I don't think that's going to happen.

Like one of the things Morgan mentioned, if you were here last night, something we've been praying about probably 11, 12 years. It just seems too big. It's too impossible.

And you have to get refocused again. Any of your kids you've been praying for instead of getting better? It gets worse. Or any struggles you've went through, your things are going good, and then it gets very difficult, very challenging.

Anybody been in a great marriage and then a couple years later, it's hell on earth? Or an addiction comes back in that you thought you closed off? It's warfare. It's battle. And so you also need to be encouraged because it is common.

And I'm finding that it's okay to be honest in prayer. Lord, I'm upset. I'm mad.

Even the prophets, I believe it was Jeremiah, he would say, why have you forsaken me? Why have you forsaken me? And he would say, I mean, this is pretty strong. I didn't write it down, but I believe it was Jeremiah 20. His heart is breaking.

He said, God, You deceived me. But what happens is when you're real with your emotions, then you can process it and God begins to heal and set free and rebuild and strengthen. So it's okay to be honest with God.

Lord, I don't feel good right now. I feel upset. I feel discouraged.

I feel like You've let me down. Sometimes I felt that He's strung me along. You know, you're waiting for something.

What's going on? But the honest heart is a praying heart. It's a heart that God can really minister to at a deep level. And as many of you know, I've found that answered prayer, to really get our prayers answered, it's the result of patiently waiting, obediently submitting, diligently acting, and faithfully pursuing.

It's a combination of all of that. And the verse I've really just been meditating on the last couple of days is Deuteronomy 20. I think we can put up Deuteronomy 23-4.

Hear, O Israel, today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. This is when God got them out of Egypt and then was going to take them into the Promised Land. And this is something that is just interesting with God.

He says, here's your promised land. But you're going to have to fight for every square inch of it. Wait.

Just give Me... But it's that fighting and it's that warfare. They had to get into battle array. They had to go against their enemies.

And so He said, do not let your heart faint. Do not be afraid. And do not tremble or be terrified because of them, for the Lord your God is He who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you.

And so there's a principle here that if you're in God's will, if you're submitting to His will, if you're dealing with besetting sin, if you're walking humbly before Him, He's going before you. He is removing the enemy. Sometimes it might result in jail time.

Paul or John Bunyan or many Christians, it could result in martyrdom. It could result, but you know that God is going before you and He is with you who can be against you. And so we know that nothing is too strong for God.

But of course, because I don't know the audience listening, we get many different, even out of the United States, people listening. I don't want to forget about this. You assume everyone on a Saturday night is a believer and they're here.

But the first question is about positioning. What side of the battle line are you on? Because so many people think, yeah, God is on my side, but are you sure? Because if you're on the enemy's side, God's not on your side. So there should be a time where you examine yourself.

And like Paul, is Jesus Christ really real to me? Do I really have this relationship with Him? Because I can call one of you right now, but if you don't have your phone, it has to be mutual. Mutual reception. And that line is broken.

That communication with God, unless you truly know Him. Many people are playing church. Many people are searching, but they've never repented and opened that line of communication.

Then they can cry out, Abba, Father. Then they can have that relationship with God. Then they will go before their enemies and God will defeat them.

John Bunyan said, if you are not a praying person, then thou art not a Christian. And I wasn't sure if I was going to put that in the notes. I kind of went back and forth, but he's actually right.

Because if there's no relationship, no heart crying out to God. Now, not a perfect prayer warrior. Who doesn't want to pray more? Me.

Not falling short, but if there's not a heart towards God in prayer, you have to really ask yourself, do I have that relationship with Him? Because a true believer will want to communicate with their Creator. Richard Baxter who said, I preach as a dying man to dying men. I preach as a dying man to dying men.

I'm sorry, I preach as a dying man to dying men. Here's what he said though, prayer is the breath of the new creation or the new creature in Christ. In other words, prayer is that breath of life.

I remember when I came back to the Lord as a prodigal. When I finally came back, it was this prayer was the breath of my new spiritual life. I wanted to pray to God in the morning and throughout the day, and like Paul said, in prayer and supplication, always in prayer and supplication.

Now there's a new heartbeat. There's a new energy. There's a new depth of relationship with God.

And it's that communication that prayer life is essential. But a few things we can get from Deuteronomy here. Listen.

Listening. Get in tune with what God is doing in order for Him to go before your enemies. He said, hear, hear O Israel.

Listen. And anytime the Bible says listen in this context, it doesn't really mean physical ears. Spiritually, look at what God is doing.

Get in tune with what God is doing. Bury yourself in the Word of God. Get a heart of worship.

Begin to develop a prayer life. Begin to develop a discipline. It's a discipline that pays off later.

Sometimes there's not immediate rewards. Is there? It's a discipline that pays off later. Right before I came up here, I didn't know if I was gonna tell you guys or not, but my wife texted me and said, my daughter got first place in Anaheim tonight in her gymnastics meet.

And she was... But last year, many of you know, she won at the national level. She was top in her class. But she's up.

She's out in the garage. She's doing pull-ups and sit-ups. She's out on the balk beam outside.

Her diet is clean. She's reading books on the plant-based athlete. And her hands are rough and callous.

I'm like, they're hard work. They look worse. I'm supposed to have those kind of hands.

I have wimpy hands compared to that. But there's a diligence that eventually pays off. It's going through this discipline and to finally get to the reward at the end.

How much more in spiritual matters when you can't see everything that's happening? You don't understand what's happening, but you press in. You persevere. Even when I don't feel like fasting.

Even when I'm fasting, it's difficult. But you're looking, Lord, it actually, I believe, has more of a power and more of a meaning when you do it in spite of how you feel. There's that pressing in.

And then we also learn from here, strengthening, strengthening. So when God tells me, He tells you, do not let your heart faint. Do not be afraid.

Do not tremble. That tells me I can struggle with all those issues. I know when the mandate came out with the vaccine, I was busy for about a month.

Emails and calls and people just really fearful and scared. I understand. You need to lose your job.

And there's a very challenging season. But this still comes into play. I would remind them of that.

That you take it before God. Do not let your heart become faint. Do not become afraid.

Do not tremble. Take it before God. Strengthen yourself in the presence of God.

So there's listening, and you have to strengthen yourself. And my concern with Christianity over the years in America is we've got a watered down Gospel and a passionate list. That's a hard one.

Christianity, I mean, there's not a lot of passion. There's not a lot of depth. There's not a lot of fighting or strength or warfare or discipline.

And the Christian life is a life of strengthening ourselves. And then also trusting. He says the battle is not yours.

And God loves when you trust Him. Trusting Him means I'm removing myself of trying to fix this. I'm not going to rush ahead.

I'm not going to try to fix this. Lord, I don't know what's happening. I don't know what's happening to me.

I might not have that job next week. I might not be able to get through this. But I'm trusting You regardless of what I see.

And when it comes to spiritual battle and prayer, confidence in battle is vital. When you lose your confidence in God, you lose your bearing. You lose that vital aspect of prayer.

And I want to just meditate here on five Scriptures that we can put up. But how many of you watch documentaries sometimes on YouTube or different things? Some of them are not very beneficial. The more you watch a documentary, the more you're convinced of the propaganda.

Well, the same thing holds true with God's Word. The more you read God's Word, the more you're convinced of the truth. If you're struggling right now, bury yourself in the Word of God.

If the Word of God is living, God-breathed, Holy Spirit-inspired, that transcends time. It is given to lead, to guide, and to do all these things to give us spiritual life. Shouldn't we eat on, consume that as a daily food? Spiritually speaking.

Bury yourself into the Word of God. You'll be convinced of the truth. So let's look at a few of those things.

Jeremiah 32. I'll just go down these. This is what you call reinforcement.

By the way, pastoring is pretty challenging too. People think, oh, you probably don't go through any difficulties or struggles. No, we're watched by L.A. County.

I've got censorship. Facebook has shut me down. YouTube has sent me warnings.

It's a very stressful time right now. But this is meditating your mind on the Word of God. This is transforming.

Be not conformed to this world's way of thinking, but be transformed by renewing your mind. Here's how you renew your mind. You pull up these Scriptures.

Ah, Lord, God, it is You who have made the heavens and the earth. By Your great power and by Your outstretched arm, nothing is too hard for You. So see, I remind myself that God actually hangs the heavens where they are, the planets where they are, the universe.

He holds all of that in the palm of His hands. And then you remind yourself that nothing then is too hard for God. And He goes on to say, behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.

Is there anything too hard for Me? Luke, for nothing will be impossible with God. Job, I know that you can do all things that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. In other words, nothing can stop God.

When God said, I'm going to build West Side Christian Fellowship, no devil in hell could stop it. Because when Jesus said, when I build my church, the gates of hell will not be able to propel against it. When God says, I want you to do this, I've called you to do this, you're going to do this.

Who can stop God Almighty? No plans of God can be thwarted. If He wants that marriage restored, that prodigal to come home, you to have that deeper life, you to start a ministry, you to be productive, you to make changes in your life, those plans cannot be stopped when God sets those in motion. Often, the only one who can stop the plans is oneself.

I might share it with the church if it comes out in January, but my old high school, I went to Pericle High School, Catholic High School. And many of you know my story. I came out of Roman Catholicism.

I was an altar boy. And obviously, you see the difference between the religion and relationship. However, there's many Catholics I know that love the Lord.

I don't understand quite that dynamic there. But anyway, they want to do a story on what God has done in my life, because they remember the Shane Eidelman who graduated 1.8, who had to cheat his way through high school, who should be dead of alcoholism before he hit 30. Who was a nobody.

Working in construction. And one of the questions was, what is your biggest challenge? I didn't even hesitate. I said the old Shane Eidelman.

You can all relate. I fear him more than the enemy. Because it's an Adamic, sinful nature that we carry around with us.

It's been crucified. I'm dead to it, but it's still alive in me if I choose to obey that Master and allow it to pull me back. I believe He wants to do more in us than we can even imagine.

But that can really slow us down. Eyes not seen, ears not heard, nor is it entered into the hearts of man the good things the Lord has prepared for those who truly love Him. Obviously, I think that's talking a lot about heaven, but it also has much application here on earth.

Philippians 4.13, Paul is saying I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Now you have to have this verse in context. I've seen boxers quote this or put it on their arm and they get knocked out the next round.

They get cocky. Or motorcycle riders, and then they crash and break a leg. And what happened? Well, you have context, people.

Context is king. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. If we had time, we could look at the whole chapter in Philippians.

But it's really when you line up with... That's what it is. When you line up with God, you're like the bullet in the chamber. And when you shoot through that gun, you're going because now you're aligned.

What can stop this? Because now you're aligned up with God's will. But when we're off of that, I can't do this if it's not according to God's will. I can't call this, I can do all things if this isn't one of those things that He wants me to do.

Or walking according to His will. For example, has He ever put a dream in your heart that has died? A desire you know? Scripture confirms it. It's according to His will.

And those types of things you've just got to hold on to. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. All things.

Getting through the difficulties and the challenges and doing what God has called me to do. And always remember with God, it's not your will, your way, your timing. It's His will.

His way. His timing. And if we're not careful, we can get disgruntled because it's not happening like we thought.

Faith plays such an important role. Abram did a great job on that yesterday I believe it was. Hebrews 11.1. Now faith.

I even think I put those up there. This definition of faith is interesting. If you look at different translations of the Bible, they were trying to... what a translator does, it's written in Greek let's say.

And so we have to find the best word now in our language that meant that in the Greek language. So it's somewhat challenging for translators. And that's why you'll have a different kind of version, the NIV.

And that's why the new King James is a lot more easily readable than the King James because the 1611 I believe it was when they had the theologians come and put that together, the vowel, and the go-fetch-a-compass, and all kinds of things that we don't even understand now. And so, this issue with faith. Now faith is confidence.

Another translation says faith shows the reality of. Or now faith is the substance. That's what I learned when I was younger.

The faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen. So we see back at the beginning, the first one, now faith is confidence.

So I have confidence in what I'm hoping for and I'm assured of it even though I don't see it. Now that's interesting. Basically, faith boils down to trusting God.

Lord, I don't see it. But I believe You. And because I believe You, I have faith that You are going to see me through.

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for. It is the evidence of things we cannot see. So basically, I want you to leave here tonight with incredible faith for what God has put on your heart.

I'm pretty certain if you're walking closely with the Lord, or if you've come back to Him, or if you're seeking Him, He'll give you certain desires to pray for a prodigal son, to pray for a wayward daughter, to pray for somebody at work, to maybe start a ministry for moms, or the homeless ministry. There's something inside of you that God places there. And those dreams have to be... I'm talking about God-given dreams.

God-given steps that He wants us to take. Faith takes as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses. So I take something by fact even though I cannot explain it physically.

And I wish I had time to even unpack our five senses. We have our sight, right? We see, but the Bible says look up for your redemption draws near. We hear, but the Bible says faith comes by hearing, spiritual hearing.

Taste. Taste and see that God is good. Touch.

Touch. Oh, that I may just touch the hem of His garment. My heart has caught the scent of God.

The smell. We smell. My heart has caught the scent of God.

And now that I've smelled that sweet-smelling aroma, I must reach out and grab the hem of His garment. That's why the altar is so important. The sweet scents of God.

Can you smell that sweet-smelling aroma when worship sounds like it's descending from the portals of heaven and your heart is just breaking and you're crying out, Oh God! And you can smell that not physically, but spiritually you're captured by the love of God. And your heart has caught the scent. And smell a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Faith engages all of these senses, spiritually speaking. And a word I want to share with you. Always remember this when it comes to prayer.

Push. Push. Pray until something happens.

Pray until something happens. I don't see it, but I believe it. My child that I'm praying for is going the opposite direction.

They don't want to go to church. I don't care. I'm going to push.

I'm going to pray until I see something happening. I'm going to push until that marriage is restored. Until that addiction is broken.

I'm going to keep fighting. I'm going to keep praying. I'm going to keep persevering.

It's not in my time. It's in God's time. And we're fighting that demonic realm as well.

Waiting upon God. We talk about that often, but it means to look for with patience. To wait for with patience.

With humility. With submissions. With submission.

The old saints. What I mean by that is those books I read 100 years, 200 years, 300 years old, they have a phrase often. I've shared before, I read a lot, that God heard our prayers and came down today.

But there's also something they would say during prayer meetings. After sometimes a couple hours in prayer and agonizing prayer, they would say, I finally gained access. I finally gained access.

Meaning, it's like their prayers are hitting the heavens of brass. It's not going anywhere. Their mind's going 100 miles an hour.

They're worried. They're doubtful. But as they press in, as they bring the flesh into submission, as the Spirit of God begins to just fill them with His power and His presence, now there's assurance.

Now there's peace. Now there's boldness. And they've gained access to the throne room of God because they persevered in prayer.

It is travail. It is labor. Folks, we're trying to build warriors.

Not wimps. We're trying to build soldiers. Not crybabies.

The Christian faith is a warring faith. It is filled with warfare and travail and labor. Because you're pulling down strongholds.

You're casting down arguments. And everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ, I've told you before many times, especially Sunday night, I'm going to be more tired after Sunday night than a 40 hour work week in construction. Mentally speaking, just exhausted because of the demonic opposition, because of the will of the body wanting to cry out, Abba Father, and just wanting to jump out and say, don't you know that Jesus is just one step away? Drink of the living water and you will never thirst again.

And the passion that you can find in fully surrendering your life. It's exhausting. And I've been there many times like you.

I've prayed in the morning and just... I don't know if I got anywhere. And then there's other times where I've gained access and I can't stop. I have worship on and I put whatever they call those earbuds and worship on and you just get on your knees and eventually you're just on the floor and you're crying out to God and you feel that heaven hears your prayer.

The Holy Spirit almost touches your shoulder and encourages you and you build. God heard my prayers today. I've gained access.

But it takes a fight. It takes struggling. It takes warfare.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds and casting down arguments in every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And here's really the point I wanted to get to to close out here shortly.

We often judge God based on the physical, what we see. Don't we? Things aren't going my way. So many people I talk to, even in my own life, we judge God based on what we see.

How we're feeling. And that changes our moods. From discouragement, instead of being encouraged, we get discouraged.

We judge God based on what we see. I don't understand what is happening. In Romans 8.28, we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Don't just memorize this verse. Get it deep down into your spirit. Because this is what's going to get you through.

I don't know why such-and-such died. I don't know why that didn't work out. I don't know why the marriage fell apart.

I don't know why that child left. I don't understand, God, instead of getting disappointed and discouraged, you hang on Romans 8.28 because there is life and death. Even though someone might die, what about if it brings somebody else to the Lord? What about if they lose a child, but yet the parents come to know the Lord? It sets something in motion.

So there is life and death. There is purpose and pain. There is destiny and disappointment.

There is faith and failure. There is clarity and confusion. There is hope and hopelessness.

And there is worship and waiting. So anytime, don't get discouraged. Begin to rebuild your life again.

Listen, here's something very interesting. The prodigal son, when he was hungry, he ate with the pigs. But when he was starving, when he was desperate, he ran home.

You see, that's the difference. Some people are hungry, they're eating with the pigs. But when you get desperate and you got to encounter God, when you've got to hear the voice of God, and you're starving, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled.

That's when God starts to hear the cries of His children and answers those prayers. When there's a desperation, I can't eat with the pigs anymore. I'm not satisfied with this life anymore.

I'm not satisfied with church. I'm not satisfied with just church and playing church and a social club. And we go through the motions, and yet the living God just steps away.

Oh, we can't play church. Is there anything too hard for God? So I'm gonna ask, as we close, bring your dead dreams, bring your broken children, bring your failed marriages, bring your declining health, bring your shattered hopes, bring your broken life, bring your defeat, your despair, your desperation and your discouragement, bring them to the altar today and drink of the fountain of living water. Drink deeply of Christ.

Let Him change you from the inside out. And then finally, I wanna encourage those, I know there's people watching right now. Tennessee, Idaho, Texas, Florida, Arizona, get on your face before God.

Get on the carpet in front of the television. Whatever it takes, there's a desperation there that must take place. Even in California, where every day goes by where somebody's putting down the very place I live and going to raise my children, and it upsets me.

It upsets me. Why don't we cover the blue state with the crimson blood of Jesus Christ and get on our face before God? And let's fill this altar if you're desperate for God. Let's get up here and pray for those broken dreams and that desperation, the broken marriage and for our children and for our state.

God, we give this to You. Lord, You put us here to contend to be the light in this darkness. Lord, help us not be grumbling and complaining and wanting to get out of dodge.

You want us to stay here and contend and pray for our families. Lord, we pray for our governor. Would You change his heart and his wife and his daughters? God, change their heart.

Focus them on You. Change Washington, D.C., God, as Your people cry out to You. If my people call upon Me, You will hear.

You will heal their lands. Lord, we're interceding. We're contending.

God, turn it around. Turn it around as we look to You and You alone. We bring our brokenness to the altar tonight.

And there's nothing too hard for You. I even pray, Lord, You begin to restore marriages. You begin to bring healing and deliverance and cancer people being set free.

We prayed for Shaley last night. I pray for that eyesight to be restored. I pray for the young man who's having surgery.

Surgery on his brain. Tomorrow, Monday, there's a 50% chance he will not survive. Lord, I pray for him.

Lord, bring healing in Jesus' name. We speak healing into these situations, God. We repent of our lack of faith.

We repent of our being disgruntled and discouraged. We repent of besetting sin. We repent of not giving God, You, our time, the sin of prayerlessness.

God, I pray there's a renewed hunger tonight that we can take into our families tomorrow morning. And that we come back, we fill this church tomorrow because we are hungry for more of You. We are desperate for You.

And we pray this in Jesus' name.

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