

[Day #25] Part 1: Prayer – When the Heavens are Like Brass

Read: Hebrews 5:7; Mark 14:35-36; 15:34

Prayer is the most critical piece in the Survival Guide for suffering. But what of those times when the “heavens are like brass” and prayer seems to “bounce off the ceiling?” These clichés accurately describe a common experience in prayer. At such times one wonders, “What’s wrong with me...my prayer...my faith?” Maybe nothing.

Jesus was a model pray-er. While the disciples saw Jesus perform amazing miracles, it was His prayer life that most intrigued them. “Lord, teach us to pray,” they asked, not “teach us to do miracles.” So, did Jesus, the model pray-er, ever experience the “heavens like brass” phenomenon? Judge for yourself based on heaven’s response to one of Jesus’ prayers.

[THE REQUEST] The gospels record that Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (Mark 14:36)

[THE OUTCOME] God did not grant Jesus’ request for the cup to pass from Him. The following day He died a horrific death, becoming our sin so we could become His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). But then the worst happened. God turned away from Jesus, who cried out in anguish of spirit, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”

The cup *did not* pass from Jesus. His Father *did turn away* from Him. Could the heavens at any other day in history seem more “like brass” than they did for Jesus on that day?

[THE PROBLEM] Was it that Jesus lacked fervency in prayer? Not at all. So fervent was He that the intensity was breaking down His body, His sweat dripping like blood.

[HEAVEN’S RECORD] What looks one way on earth can look quite different from heaven. While the gospels describe eyewitness accounts of Gethsemane and Golgotha, Hebrews 5:7 reveals the testimony from heaven. This is how that account goes: “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”

According to heaven, Jesus’ cries *were heard*, His tears *seen*, His prayer, “Not my will but yours,” *answered*.

Though the heavens seemed like brass that day, it turns out they were as soft as the morning mist, just as they are for all who pray in reverent submission.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Bible identifies the key to Jesus' powerful prayer life as being His reverent submission, as evidenced in the phrase, "Not my will but yours be done."

Some today suggest that, while it was right for Jesus in to pray "not my will by yours be done," for us to pray that way today indicates a lack of faith; they claim that this prayer is simply giving ourselves (and our belief in God) an "out" if God doesn't answer.

Is praying, "Not my will but yours be done" indicating a lack of faith or reverent submission? What do you think?