

Theme: Does God hear our prayers when we pray?

Texts: Psalm 34:1–20 & 1 John 5:13–17

Opening Prayer: **Gracious and Ever-Present God**, we come before You today with hearts that are both weary and hopeful. Sometimes our prayers are full of confidence, and other times they are whispered with trembling lips. Yet we trust, Lord, that You are listening, even when we cannot feel Your presence, even when we do not see the answers. Open our ears to hear Your voice, our hearts to receive Your comfort, and our spirits to rest in Your faithfulness. Teach us to praise You in the valley, to trust You in the silence, and to seek You in all circumstances. May our worship today remind us that You are near to the brokenhearted and ever faithful to Your children. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen**.

God Still Listens: Have you ever prayed and felt like your words were bouncing off the ceiling? Have you ever cried out in the middle of the night and wondered if heaven was silent? Many of us have been there, moments when our hearts were breaking, when our prayers seemed unanswered, when it felt like God was far away. We whisper the question we're almost afraid to ask: **"Does God really hear me when I pray?"**

A few years ago, a young mother was in a hospital waiting room clutching her three-year-old son's blanket. Her little boy was in surgery after a terrible accident. She had prayed all night, cried all morning, and now she just sat there empty, exhausted, and afraid. She told a chaplain who stopped by, *"I've prayed and prayed, but it feels like God is nowhere near. I can't hear Him."* The chaplain gently replied, *"Sometimes when we can't hear God, it's because He's busy carrying us through the silence."* Hours later, the doctor came out and said, *"Your son will be fine. It was close, but he'll recover."* Tears filled her eyes, not just tears of relief, but of realization. She later said, *"Even when I couldn't feel Him, God was still listening. He was working when I was worrying."* My friends, that's the truth we often forget: **God still listens**. Even when our faith feels weak. Even when the words won't come out right. Even when fear drowns out our confidence, **God's ear is never closed to His children**.

That's the same truth we hear echoing through **Psalm 34** and **1 John 5**. In **Psalm 34**, David is on the run. He has just escaped from King Achish by pretending to be insane, drooling, scratching, and acting like a madman to save his life (1 Samuel 21). He's humiliated, frightened, and uncertain of his future. Yet, out of that dark and desperate place, David sings: *"I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."* (Psalm 34:4). David's story reminds us that sometimes the most powerful praise comes from the most painful places. Apostle **John** writes to believers who are also struggling, not with enemies and swords, but with doubt and uncertainty. They wonder if God still hears them. They're questioning their salvation and the power of their prayers. John writes to remind them and us of this unshakable truth: *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."* (1 John 5:14). John says we don't approach God as strangers or beggars; we come as children, confident that our Father listens.

Prayer Is Our Lifeline: David says, “*I sought the Lord.*” John says, “*Ask, and He hears.*” Together, they teach us that **prayer is the bridge between desperation and deliverance.** God’s hearing is not passive; it’s purposeful. When Scripture says, “*The Lord heard him,*” it doesn’t mean God simply noticed David’s prayer; it means He responded with power. God doesn’t store your prayers in a folder labeled “maybe later.” He acts in His perfect timing. Prayer is not about instructing God on what to do; it’s about aligning our hearts with what He’s already doing. Sometimes God answers by changing the situation. Other times, He answers by changing *us*. Think of a child holding a parent’s hand as they cross a busy street. The parent sees more, knows more, and moves at a steady pace. The child may pull or protest, but the parent doesn’t let go. Prayer is that grip, our connection to the One who sees the traffic of life from above and safely guides us through. When you pray and don’t see an answer right away, don’t lose heart. God’s silence doesn’t mean He’s not listening; it often means He’s working in ways you can’t yet see. So, keep praying. Keep seeking. Keep knocking.

Sometimes God delivers us *through* the trial, not *from* it. He didn’t keep Daniel out of the lions’ den; He kept the lions’ mouths shut. He didn’t spare the Hebrew boys from the furnace; He walked with them in it. And He didn’t stop Jesus from the cross; He used it to bring salvation to the world. God’s deliverance is not always about removal; it’s about redemption.

A potter once told a student, “The clay must go through the fire to become strong. If I take it out too soon, it will crumble. If I leave it too long, it will crack. But if I keep it in just long enough, it becomes useful.” My friends, some of us are in the fire, but the Potter has His hand on the thermostat. He knows exactly when to bring you out, refined, restored, and ready to testify. When you look back over your life, you’ll realize that every time you thought you were breaking, God was building you. Every cry He heard became a chapter in your redemption story. And when you finally stand on the other side of your storm, you’ll echo David’s words: “*I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.*”

John ends by expanding our vision of prayer. It’s not just about *my* breakthrough; it’s about *our* restoration. We are called to pray not only for ourselves, but for one another. When you pray for someone who’s struggling, someone in sin, someone in grief, someone in doubt, you are standing in the gap between heaven and earth on their behalf. You become a spiritual bridge for someone who may have lost the strength to pray for themselves. Who around you need your prayers today? Your family, your coworkers, your church, your community? someone’s breakthrough might depend on your intercession. Prayer isn’t just a private act; it’s a communal ministry. When the church prays together, the enemy trembles, strongholds break, and hearts are healed.

We’ve seen that through every season; *God still listens.* But what does that mean for *you* today? It means that your prayers are never wasted. Your tears are not ignored. Your sighs in the dark are heard in heaven. When you kneel beside your bed, whispering names and needs no one else knows; *God hears.* When you drive in silence, praying under your breath for strength to get through the day; *God hears.* When you don’t even have words, just groans and tears; *the Spirit Himself intercedes for you with groanings too deep for words.* (Romans 8:26). God’s listening doesn’t depend on your perfection, it depends on His promise.

When God Seems Silent; Let's be honest, sometimes, God's silence hurts. You pray for healing, and the sickness stays. You pray for direction, and the door stays closed. You pray for peace, and the storm still rages. But silence doesn't mean absence. When you can't trace His hand, you can still trust His heart. Think of Jesus in Gethsemane; He prayed three times, "Father, let this cup pass from me," and yet the cup remained. But through that unanswered prayer came our salvation. God may not answer *your way*, but He will always answer *His way*; and His way is always good. There are times when prayer feels like shouting into the wind. When the doctor's report doesn't change. When the relationship still falls apart. You pray, you wait, and it feels like nothing is happening. Many believers secretly ask: "*If God hears, why hasn't He answered?*" Sometimes, God is working *behind the curtain of silence* to write a miracle that will make sense only in hindsight. So, if you are waiting, hold on. You are not forgotten. God still listens.

Finally brethren: Years ago, in Washington D.C., a world-class violinist named Joshua Bell decided to play incognito in a subway station during rush hour. He stood there, dressed in jeans and a baseball cap, playing a priceless Stradivarius violin. Over a thousand people passed by in 45 minutes, but only seven stopped to listen. To the rest, he was just background noise. Yet the music never stopped, beautiful, masterful, powerful, even though few noticed. That's how God sometimes works in our lives. He's speaking, guiding, moving, but we're rushing through life's noise, not realizing the divine melody that's still playing. When we finally slow down, in prayer, in worship, in reflection, we discover that He's been there the whole time, listening and responding with perfect harmony. So, the issue is never that God isn't listening. It's that sometimes, we're too hurried to hear His gentle reply.

Pastoral Invitation: So, beloved, what will you do now that you know God still listens?

Closing Prayer: **Loving and Listening God,** we thank You that Your ears are always open to the cries of Your children. You hear the prayers we whisper and the tears we cannot speak. When we are afraid, you draw near. When we are weary, you give us strength. Teach us to trust You in the silence, to praise You in the struggle, and to believe that You are always working — even when we cannot see it. Lord, for every heart that feels unheard today, remind them that You are listening. Lift the weary, comfort the broken, and restore the faith of those who wait on You. We rest in the promise that You still listen, you still care, and You still deliver. In the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Intercessor and Redeemer, we pray. **Amen.**

Benediction: May the God who hears your every prayer and draws near to your broken heart go with you this day and every day. May His peace guard your hearts, His presence surrounds your paths, and His power deliver you from fear and despair. Go in confidence, knowing that the One who listens now will answer, restore, and redeem in His perfect timing. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. **Amen.**