

When Sin Keeps God from Answering Isaiah 59

What was going on with Israel? (59:1-2)

Israel has been praying, but God was not listening to her prayers.

Why was God not listening? (59:1-8)

Because of Israel's sins, which are listed in vv.3-8.

How did this affect Israel? (59:9-11)

She was devastated.

But this raises a question — we all sin every day. So do we need to be sinless to have God answer our prayers?

No. Peter sinned by denying Christ. And God continued answering His prayers. So —

What was it about Israel's sin that caused God to stop answering? (59:12-15)

Israel was sinning without any confession, repentance, or remorse.

Sometimes the reason God withdraws His presence and doesn't answer prayer is because we are continuing in willful sin.

You can see this also in Psa 66:18 and 1Pet 3:7.

This does not mean that all unanswered prayer shows unconfessed sin. In 2Co 12 we read how God did not answer Paul's prayer — not because of Paul's sin, but because God was going to give him something even better.

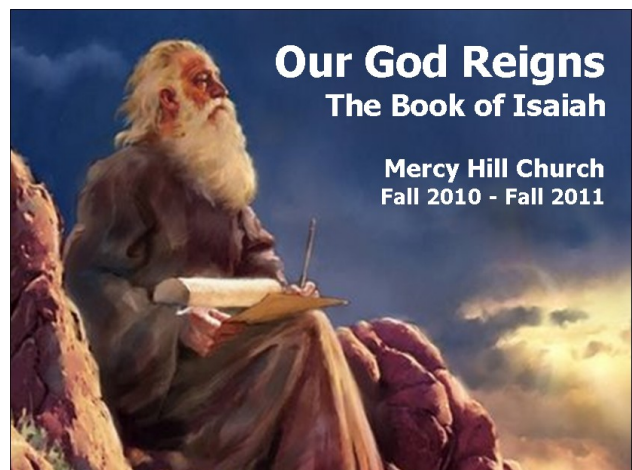
So how can we tell when unanswered prayer is because of unconfessed sin? Usually we already know — or if we ask God, He will tell us.

Why does God withdraw His presence and stop answering prayer when there's unconfessed sin? To urge us to repent.

Why is it so crucial that we repent? (59:16-21)

Because if we don't repent, if we continue in willful sin, that will show we are not trusting Jesus and we will face God's judgment (vv.16-19).

Because if we do repent, we have a Redeemer who frees us from sin's guilt and power (vv.20-21)



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

Have you had seasons where you did not sense God's presence or see Him answering prayer? Was it God's mercy? Or God's warning? How could you tell?

If we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, why is it so crucial to repent of willful, unconfessed sin?

Share in 2's about any willful, unconfessed sin you need to deal with. Pray for each other, as you repent, genuinely confess your sin to Jesus, ask Jesus to forgive you and change you.

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

