

Psalm 40 Triumphs and Troubles

By Pastor Roy Hogan

The time of the writing of this Psalm of David is not known. Could it have been penned down in his fugitive days when he was fleeing from Saul? Was it penned down while he was under attack by his son Absalom? For sure, David was a man of troubles and triumphs.

I trust you will derive some benefit from the study of this chapter.

40:1

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Sometimes, it seems God is never going to answer our prayers. Our patience is tried. We get weary waiting for an answer. Our faith is tested. Could it be God is testing our faith by waiting before he answers our prayers? Faith is the basis of our doctrine. Faith is the core of our beliefs. Yet, when it comes to praying, we get testy with God. We want answers, and we want them now.

It is no marvel that patience is a fruit of the Holy spirit. Patience is an attribute a child of God can be thankful for. Some, like myself, seemingly were born without patience. Suppose God answered every prayer immediately. Do you give your child everything they ask for the first time they ask? Why, then, should God answer every prayer the first time we prayed? If he did, we would be spoiled brats. We would “abuse the system.” We would cease to walk by faith. Paul, the greatest of all apostles by my estimation, prayed three times before getting an answer regarding his thorn in the flesh.

God always hears our prayers. He answers according to his will and his timetable.

40:2

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

These are two of the loveliest verses in the Bible. Through the ages, these two verses have been quoted by the saints to describe the awfulness of sin and the glory of salvation.

One of the best ways to describe living the life of a sinner is to compare that life to a mudslide. Clay is a very sticky soil. Clay is reasonably stable when dry, but when it is wet, it is unstable. Such is sin. It is an unstable soil. It is miry. Sin grabs hold of the sinner. Lift one foot out of sin, and the other foot sinks further down. It is sometimes said “gravity is a very stubborn thing.” The gravity of sin is very stubborn. David could not get himself out of sin. The longer he stayed in sin, the deeper he sunk. Finally, he found himself in a horrible, hopeless pit. To get out of the pit required help from a higher power.

When David got out of the pit, he found that God had put him on a solid rock. God had transplanted him onto *established* ground. How big a deal is salvation? It is like being stuck in the mud one moment, and the next moment, being on a solid rock. Do you remember when you got saved? How can anyone that has been truly saved ever forget. I was down, and now I am up. I was stuck, and now I am free. I was sinking, and now I am stable. I hopeless, and now hope is my song. Glory to the God of the universe for the marvelous plan of salvation.

40:3

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Brother Adrian Rogers had a saying that went like this: “If your religion did not change you, change religions.” The Sunday morning I was saved, my father, the pastor, called on the song director to sing “A New Name in Glory.” By faith in the blood of

the cross of Calvary, I stood from the altar a new enrollee in the Lambs Book of Life.

Salvation puts a new song in the saved persons mouth. Danny, a friend, gave me this testimony of his salvation:

I had a vile mouth as a sinner. At the plant where I worked, I was assigned to a position that required me to sit on an elevated platform several feet above other workers. I had to yell for others to hear me due to the machinery noise. My co-workers knew when I opened my mouth, curse words were coming out. One Monday morning after being on the job a few hours and communicating with the other workers, one of the employees paused to ask me "Danny, what has happened? Did you get saved?"

Danny had gotten saved on Sunday. He had a new song in his mouth. As David said in verse 3, *many shall see it*. Danny's co-workers *saw* the change in his heart because they *heard* a new song in his mouth. Not everyone can sing. Not everyone can teach the word of God. Few are called to preach the Word. Yet, all can, with their mouth, praise the Lord that others may fear and trust God.

40:4

Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

If you are born-again, beware of the company you keep. Folk mark you for those around you. There are some folk children of God cannot associate with. The believer is warned in verse 4 to stay away from the proud and the liar.

40:5

Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

God has surely done many wonderful works. We look at his creative work in the universe as marvel. We look at humanity, and we stand amazed. Once, an acquaintance sent me a picture of his newborn twin granddaughters. I sent a short reply: Congratulations. There is a God.

Try to imagine all that God had done and is doing this very moment. He is Chief Operating Officer of universe. He is numbering the hairs of the head of more than seven billion inhabitants of planet earth. He must grant permission for a sparrow to fall to the ground. Science cannot find the end to the universe. Yet, despite all God's obligations, he can't get me off his mind. Not a day goes by but what I get busy with one assignment and forget another assignment. I recall a time in my life when I managed 60 employees. I am not sure I even knew all of the names. This is not a problem for God. The very thought that God never ceases to have me on his mind is something I cannot comprehend.

His thoughts of one human being are more than can be numbered. Imagine trying to keep up with seven billion people. If we could ask God how he does it, he may reply "No worries."

40:6-8

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

There are four rituals mentioned in verse 6: sacrifice, offering, burnt offering, and sin offering. These four rituals refer to the Mosaic Law. Each of the four were for a specific purpose which we will not, at this time, address. Rituals certainly were important in the economy of the Law of Moses. Each ritual was a type of Christ and his work at Calvary.

Yet, rituals often became a substitute for a genuine relationship with God that can only be achieved by doing his will. Folk would, as a routine, bring a sacrifice to the priest. They would observe the killing of the sacrifice and the routine that followed and never have one thought toward God. In essence, the ritual of the sacrifice was their god.

The Jews made sure they washed six times before they ate. They folded their napkin in a certain manner. They proceeded to devour the food and never give God praise or thanksgiving.

King Saul was sent on a mission by God to utterly destroy the Amalekites. He was to spare nothing, including their king, save a few articles for the house of God. Against the command of God, he spared King Agag and brought home a number of animals. The contraband sheep bleated. Saul was caught. Samuel, the prophet and judge, rebuked him. Saul proceeded to make the excuse that the animals were needed for the rituals the people conducted. You see, rituals were placed ahead of the command and will of God. This still happens today. Folk are baptized and partake of the Lord's supper who have no idea in their heart who God is. To attempt to please God by rituals will not please him. Doing his will is what God requires.

The key to obeying God is given in verse 8. The key to obeying him is to have him in one's heart. I married my wife more than 40 years ago. I am stuck with her. I must live in the house with her. I see her every day. I see her every night. We share the same last name. It behooves me to get along with her. Such is the relationship David had with God. If we have God in our heart, we are stuck with him. It behooves us to get along with him. It would better to be at odds with fellow man than to be at odds with Almighty God.

I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. 10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy and thy truth from the great congregation. 11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

All the doctrine of God, Christianity, sin, sacrifices, and sanctification hinge on one great truth- GOD IS RIGHTEOUS. God always does what is right. A very successful football coach who has won a multitude of championships is the envy of every other coach. How does this coach have such great success? One of his assistants gave the answer: He does everything right 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. So does God do everything right all the time.

The greatest reason, by far, that men reject God is that he is righteous. Christ was rejected on earth because he was righteous. Christ would not party with men. He would not curse as they cursed. He would not drink strong drink as men did. Your friends will reject you for being righteous. Yet, there is no better way to reveal God to sinners than to live righteous.

If a person has God in their heart, it will show in the life they display. David stated, in verse 10, that he had not hid God's righteousness. God's righteousness cannot be hidden any more than light can be hidden amidst darkness. To hide the righteousness of God is to hide life amidst death. Persons who have a struggle with right and wrong are not born again.

God's righteousness reveals his *faithfulness and salvation*. Why would God be faithful to a sinner? Why would God offer salvation to billions of sinners living on earth today? He does so because his righteousness reveals man's lost state so that he can come to a place of salvation. Do not so sit at the bar beside a sinner and drink strong drink with him in an attempt to win him to Christ. Stay

away for the bar you once frequented so that the sinner can see the change God made in you.

God's righteousness is what reveals his *lovingkindness*, verse 11. A demon can love a demon. Dope-heads love dope-dealers. Sinners love sinners. This is understandable. Amazingly, righteous God loves sinners! So, we conclude, his righteousness reveals his *lovingkindness*. All we like sheep have gone astray, yet God loves us. There is none righteous, no not one, yet God loves us!

Ps 40:12

For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

Ps 40:13

Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

Ps 40:14

Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

Ps 40:15

Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

Ps 40:16

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

Ps 40:17

But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.