

SBC – Oct. 23, 2022

Psalm 40 (NKJV) - “The Messiah Fulfills God’s Will”

Psalm 40 is another Psalm written by David who wrote at least half of the Psalms. We are not told the occasion of this Psalm but verses 6-8 are clearly applied to the Messiah in Hebrews 10:5-9 making this a definitive Messianic Psalm.

David wrote out of his own experience, but then the Holy Spirit took David’s experience and applied it to the greater David – the Lord Jesus Christ. Often we see the Spirit taking David’s experience and applying it to Christ in an even greater way. In many ways the experience of David was a prophetic precursor to that of the coming Messiah Who was the Son of David.

Slide # 1

Outline of Psalm 40

Thanksgiving for Deliverance – vv. 1-10

Prayer for Deliverance – vv. 11-17

Some think this Psalm seems inverted. Normally we think about praying for deliverance and then thanking God for what He does. But Psalm 40 reverses the order. What is likely in view is that in verses 1-10 David is remembering a past deliverance of how God has worked and then on that basis in verses 11-17 he is praying for deliverance from a present difficult situation.

Actually, this is a great reminder. When we are going through a very difficult time – reflect back on God has answered prayer in the past and what He has faithfully brought you through. That gives encouragement in seeking God in the present situation.

The Psalm begins with...

Psalm 40 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.

“Waited patiently” is more literally “waiting I waited”. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is wait on the Lord – although for most of us humans that is not easy. God’s timing is perfect so we need to wait on Him.

And in waiting we need to pray. That is what David did and God responded. “He inclined to me” is the idea of God stooping out of heaven. God heard David’s cry. Obviously, as David was waiting he was praying. Praying and waiting go together.

How honored we are that God listens to us. He hears our prayers and He responds according to His own perfect timing in accordance with His will which is best for us and for His own glory.

David recalls...

**2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.**

What a beautiful verse of deliverance. A horrible pit of miry clay is figurative language for a terrible situation in which David could not get himself out.

One can make lots of applications here.

Slide # 2

- A pit of despair.
- A pit of resentment.
- A pit of immorality.
- A pit of abuse.
- A pit of pride.
- A pit of false accusations and slander.
- A pit of failure.

We don’t know exactly what this pit was, but it was horrible and David needed deliverance. In response to waiting upon God in prayer God intervened – brought him up out of the slime pit – set his feet upon a rock and established his steps. God put him on firm ground and got him going again. In response David said...

3 He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

This occasion of deliverance called for a new song of praise that would be a vibrant testimony causing others to reverence and trust in the LORD. Indeed, when God answers prayer and delivers us, we should make much of it to the glory of God.

4 Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.

God blesses trust that is expressed in waiting on the Lord in prayer. This is in contrast to the proud who don't look to the LORD or who turn to the lies of idolatry for help.

David then praises God for His many wonderful works. God does lots of things. Continually He is intervening on our behalf in one way or another. And David says His thoughts towards us are innumerable. God is constantly thinking about and working on behalf of His own. That in itself is a beautiful thought. He is constantly thinking about us – we should constantly be thinking about Him.

And that brings us to the Messianic verses of 6-8. Again, this was David's testimony but then it is also applied to the greater David in an even greater manner as seen in Hebrews 10:5-9.

6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Note the structure of this verse which is making a point.

Slide # 3

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;

My ears You have opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

David got the point that the real thing God was after was an obedient heart. That's the MAJOR emphasis in this whole context. And it was that heart of obedience that ultimately led Jesus all the way to the cross (cf. Phil. 2:8).

It's not that God wanted nothing to do with the OT sacrifices and offerings – rather it's that the ultimate thing that God really wanted was a right heart.

Only if sacrifices and offerings were brought with a right heart were they pleasing to God. Ultimately before God it's all about the HEART. This text totally blows away that which is merely outward and formal religion.

Slide # 4

1 Samuel 15:22 (NKJV)

22 So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams.

Slide # 5

Micah 6:6–8 (NKJV)

6 With what shall I come before the LORD, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But **to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?**

Slide # 6

Psalm 51:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are **a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart**— These, O God, You will not despise.

Above all what God wants is an obedient HEART. Nothing else really matters if that is not in place. And if the HEART is right everything else will fall into place.

The OT rituals, even those ordained by God only had real meaning before God if they reflected an obedient heart that wanted to do God's will. Apart from a heart that wants to obey they were just empty rituals that really were an offense to God (cf. Isa. 1:10-17; Amos 5:21-24).

“My ears you have opened” is more literally, “my ears you have dug”. Some commentators think the sense here connects with the practice in the OT where a slave would indicate he wanted to serve his master forever by having his ear pierced through (cf. Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17).

In my view that is probably not the case here. In the case of the slave the outer rim of the ear was bored through but here the idea is literally the hollowing out or the digging out the ear to make the passage clear. The sense then is that hearing would then be unimpeded and to hear perfectly corresponds to perfect obedience. Jesus often said, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear” (Mk. 4:23; 7:16). The sense is to respond with faith that obeys.

In addition, “ears” is plural here in Psalm 40:6 whereas just one ear would be pierced in the case of the slave in the OT. David is saying that God doesn’t just want mere ritual observance, but rather a responsive heart of obedience. He wants ears that are very sensitive to what He is saying and then are obedient.

The critic at this point steps forward and claims to have found an error in the Bible. The reason being is that Hebrews 10:5 in quoting Psalm 40:6 translates “My ears You have opened” as “a body You have prepared Me.”

Slide # 7

Psalm 40:6 (NKJV)

6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; **My ears You have opened.** Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Hebrews 10:5 (NKJV)

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But **a body You have prepared for Me.**”

Here is the explanation. The Holy Spirit is the divine author behind all of the Scriptures. In quoting from Psalm 40 the writer of Hebrews quoted from the Septuagint (A Greek translation of the OT Scriptures) and not the Hebrew. The Septuagint translated Psalm 40:6 more generally in the sense of “a body You have prepared for Me” which brings across the main idea being developed in the context of the full surrender of obedience which involves the whole person.

Now if the Holy Spirit wants to make application of Psalm 40:6 in this way, who are we to argue?

Slide # 8

As to the authority for making such a change, the same Holy Spirit who first inspired the words in Psalm 40 certainly has the right to clarify them when He quotes it in the N.T. – **William MacDonald**

So what we have in Hebrews 10:5 is an inspired “synecdoche”. A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part (here the ears) is given as representative of the whole (here the body). Thus, the NT in making an inspired application expands and explains the meaning as further applied to the Messiah at the time of His incarnation.

The meaning is the same; the ears are to the body as the part to the whole. – **The Reformation Study Bible**

To have your ears opened and thus responsively obedient is the equivalent of completely presenting your body to God for His service (cf. Rom. 12:1-2). This was the response of the Messiah at the time of the Incarnation.

Slide # 9**Isaiah 50:4–5 (NKJV)**

4 “The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, **He awakens My ear To hear** as the learned.

5 The **Lord God has opened My ear**; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

Hebrews builds on the idea of complete obedience and what that involved saying that God did not desire the OT sacrifices and offerings. Although God instituted the OT sacrificial system, yet they never represented God’s ultimate intention. They were merely shadows and types of something better to come. These sacrifices never really satisfied God and were not the final solution to the sin problem. Both the sacrifices themselves were inadequate as were those offering up the sacrifices.

The answer was in God providing the Lamb of God Who represents perfect obedience that was pleasing to God.

The Savior’s ears were open to hear and to obey the will of His Father. It was with this attitude of willing and ready obedience that Christ came into the world. – **William MacDonald**

7 Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

For David this had the sense that he was ready to live out the book regarding all that God had for him to do (cf. Dt. 17:18-20; 2 Kg. 11:12; 1 Kg. 2:3).

As for the greater David, the sense here is that Jesus made Himself fully available. In saying, “**Behold I come**” is the sense that He came willing and ready to fulfill the will of God. And He came to completely do everything that God had prophetically written of Him in the “**scroll of the book**”. There was nothing in God’s book that He was not willing and ready to carry out.

The sense may also be here that He indeed is the main subject of the book and He comes to fulfill it.

From cover to cover of the OT it was foretold not only that Christ would come into the world but that He would come with an eager, ready spirit to do the will of God. – **William MacDonald**

When Jesus came He said of the Scriptures, “these are they which testify of Me.” (Jn. 5:39). After His resurrection to the disciples on the Emmaus road Christ said...

Slide # 10

Luke 24:25–27 (NKJV)

25 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in **all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

27 And beginning at **Moses** and **all the Prophets**, He expounded to them in **all the Scriptures** the things concerning Himself.

Slide # 11

The Lord Jesus gave them the great key to the understanding of Scripture – that He Himself is its subject and that in Him the entire Book finds its unity.” – C.I. Scofield

8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.”

And here is the main point. God wants a right heart that delights in doing His will. He wants a heart that is fully in tune with His law – which is to say His Word and His will. Yes, this expressed David’s heart, but supremely that of Jesus the Messiah. God loves a cheerful giver and there never was a more ready giver to do the will of the Father than Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 9:7).

God gave Jesus a human body and in the context of that body the whole of His being was given over to doing the will of God. OBEDIENTLY doing the will of God defined Jesus – even to the point of being obedient to the death of the cross. In John 4:34 Jesus said, “my food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” In John 6:38 He said, “I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” And in John 8:29 Jesus said of the Father, “I always do those things that please Him.”

And this is how it ended...

Slide # 12

Isaiah 53:11 (NKJV)

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and **be satisfied**. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

The context of quoting Ps. 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-9 is all about Christ’s sacrifice on the cross which is the ultimate expression of submission and obedience. In this He fully obeyed the will of the Father and completely fulfilled what God had prophetically had for Him to do regarding His first coming.

And one of the KEY things that made His sacrifice so acceptable to God the Father was His wholehearted desire to obey. No other sacrifice was ever offered up to God with this measure of wholehearted devotion. It was precious and satisfying to God.

Hebrews 10 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible because it emphasizes the absolute and total sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice.

Slide # 13

Hebrews 10:11–14 (NKJV)

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

The sacrifice borne out of a pure heart of obedience resulted in an offering that was so satisfying to the Father that it perfected all true believers forever! How glorious is that? For all eternity we will be celebrating the perfect obedience of Christ Who as Paul says was, “obedient to the point of death, even the death the cross.” (Phil. 2:8).

And Paul goes on to say that this was so pleasing to God the Father that He has “exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11)

Fittingly verse 9 follows saying...

9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.

10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.

God is to be praised for what He has done. One of the ways we bring glory to God is to praise Him publicly in the assembly of His people. Before God this is the sweet savor of true worship.

At verse 11 the tone changes. David switches from praise for past deliverance to petition for present deliverance. David wants God to do it again.

11 Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of my head; Therefore my heart fails me.

Clearly not everything in this Psalm is applicable to the Messiah as He never sinned, but here David says that his many iniquities are more than the hairs of his head. The word Iniquity (Heb. "Avon") means "to bend, twist, or distort". It is the idea of perversion. It is a disobedient twisting, or distorting of life contrary to God's word that calls for judgment.

We don't know what the current occasion was. Some have suspected it may have been in relation to running for his life from Absalom which was a consequence of his great sin, but in truth we don't really know.

**13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me!
14 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who seek to destroy my life; Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor Who wish me evil.
15 Let them be confounded because of their shame, Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"**

Verses 13-17 are almost identical to Psalm 70.

Clearly these people were trying to destroy David and were vicious in their treatment of him. He appealed to God for divine intervention once again, such as he has known in the past as referenced earlier in the chapter.

And he prays very specifically that God deal with them and pours out his heart concerning their vicious taunting and ridicule as they say, "Aha, aha" to him.

16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"

What a beautiful verse. What a great prayer. Let all who seek God find joy and gladness in Him.

David's end goal desire was that all those who love the truth of God's deliverance continually say, "The LORD be magnified!"

17 But I am poor and needy; Yet the LORD thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.

David was poor in the sense of having no resources to deal with this current situation – he was needy in that he was very vulnerable.

But he finds his comfort in the fact that God thinks upon him. Twice in this chapter he underscores this comforting reality.

Slide # 14

Psalm 40:5 (NKJV)

5 Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And **Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted** to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are **more than can be numbered.**

Psalm 40:17 (NKJV)

17 But I am poor and needy; Yet **the LORD thinks upon me.** You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.

What a great truth. Whatever we are going through the LORD knows about it and He is thinking about us – meaning He cares.

Someone has well said that the “I am” and the “You are” of Psalm 40:17 says it all.

Slide # 15

Psalm 40:17 (NKJV)

17 But **I am** poor and needy...

You are my help and my deliverer...

The Psalm ends with David asking that God not delay in coming to his aid. The Psalm begins with David waiting patiently (v. 1) and concludes with him pleading that God not delay (v. 17).

Indeed, in dire circumstances waiting is hard, and yet what a great consolation: ***“Yet the LORD thinks upon me.”***

God desires sold out obedience from the heart and sometimes that is sorely tested in the context of WAITING. But David provides a good reminder that God is a God of deliverance and “***Blessed is the man who makes the LORD His trust***”.

God help us to TRUST in our great God even in very trying times where we are reduced to waiting patiently on the LORD in prayer.

Let this be our watchword: “***Blessed is the person who makes the LORD His trust.***”

Keep the faith and remember God is ever thinking about you – even in the hardest of times.