

## Sold Out To Do God's Will

### Psalm 40

Intro. 1) Sometimes when circumstances are tough and situations are heavy and weigh us down, we have a slogan or popular saying that sums up how we feel: "Life is the pits!" King David certainly felt this way at times in his life, and he expressed his thinking about it in Psalm 40.

- Psalm 40 is similar to Psalm 27 in structure, composed of 2 distinct sections: 1) thanksgiving (vs. 1-10) and personal lament (vs. 11-17).
- Psalm 40:13-17 is basically identical to Psalm 70.
- In spite of 2 distinct sections, there is a remarkable unity and structure to this song that, though penned by David, anticipates a more complete understanding and fulfillment in his greater Son, Jesus of Nazareth. This is certainly the understanding of the author of Hebrews, for in Hebrews 10:5-7 he quotes Psalm 40:6-8, applying it to the life of the Lord Jesus. Indeed only the Lord Jesus could say with purity of heart and devotion what is stated in these verses.

2) Verse 8 captures the essence of this Psalm and the heart of the Lord Jesus, "I delight to do your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart." Here then is a life sold out to do God's will. Here is the life God desires and rightly expects of us as well. What does such a life look like? What will be its passions?

#### I. You must wait on the Lord with confidence 40:1-3

Something has happened to David that figuratively speaking, has put him in a "horrible pit," a "slimy pit" (*NIV*). Sinking in "miry clay", he realizes only one person can deliver,

rescue, save him. It is the Lord (*Jehovah*). What do we discover as we wait on God when trouble comes and life is the pits?

1) He will hear you when you call 40:1

- We must wait patiently. God has His timing.
- When we cry out: 1) He inclines (turns) to us and 2) hears our cry with an intent to answer.

2) He will help you when you are down 40:2

Here is the answer to the prayer of vs. 1.

- He brought him up out of a hopeless and desperate situation.
- He set his feet on a rock, a solid and secure foundation (cf 2 Cor. 4:8-9).
- He established his steps. Both a foundation and direction, solid ground and guidance. This is the help Yahweh gives to those who are His.

3) He will honor you when you worship 40:3

- A new song in his mouth is a song of salvation, even vindication.
- It is a new song of praise, a hymn of exultation in the Lord.
  - But, note the startling evangelistic impulse: 1) many will see; 2) many will fear; and 3) many will trust in the Lord! John Piper says, “Our song is our evangelism.”
  - Our testimony and experience of God’s salvation will be a witness that will bring others to the Lord! Others will be saved when they see how great is the God of my salvation (Ps. 27:1).

David, no doubt, would affirm the words of the hymn writer Charles Gabriel,  
 “From sinking sand, He lifted me. With tender hand, He lifted me. From  
 shades of night to plains of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!”

II. You must trust in the Lord with conviction 40:4-5

Standing on the rock of his salvation, David challenges and commands those who trust in the Lord when they are in the pit of despair, or like the Lord Jesus, the pit and miry clay of death.

1) Trust the Lord who is true to you 40:4

- The man of Psalm 1 appears once again. He is the one who trust in the Lord and is blessed by the Lord.
- He will not respect, look to, or trust in the proud, those who foolishly trust in themselves rather than Jehovah. These persons turn and believe a lie, they “turn aside to false gods” (*NIV*), in some instances the false god who is themselves.
  - To trust in you rather than Christ is to make yourself into a god and to commit the sin of idolatry.
- No, trust in the god who is trustworthy, reliable and dependable, the one 1 John 5:20 says “is the true God and eternal life; the one Rev. 19:11 calls “faithful and true.”

2) Trust the God who thinks of you 40:5

- Our God is great and awesome, incomprehensible and incapable of our full understanding. This is true on a cosmic level. It is true on a personal level too.

- “Many are the wonderful works which the Lord has done.
  - Many are your thoughts (your purposes and plans).
- So many and so wonderful are God’s works and plans in our life that David says: 1) no one can recount them and 2) if I tried (!), they are more than can be numbered.
  - The past is full of His blessings, the present complete with His care, and the future abundant in His plans. This is the God we can trust with conviction. This is the only God we can count on anytime, anyplace, in any and every moment of life.

### III. You must delight in the Lord with consecration 40:6-8

- Here is the heart of this psalm, the pivotal point to which everything flows. Kidner says they “anticipate the Servant prophecies and the New Covenant.” The author of Hebrews, utilizing the interpretive key of Luke 24:25-27, 44, sees these words realized in the Messiah-King, Jesus Christ.
- The words echo those of Samuel in his rebuke of Saul in 1 Sam. 15:22, “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.” The words also preview in summary fashion the career of Christ, and provide for us a pattern of radical devotion and consecration to the will of God in our lives.

#### 1) Do not become consumed with externals

40:6

- Perhaps David had presented his sacrifice and offering before going to battle, atoning for his sin as well as the sin of the people whom the King often represented to God, along with the High Priest. Was this enough? God says no.
- God desires more than mere formalism and routine ritualism. He wants you, that to which sacrifice and offering should give witness (Note the ABA structures of v.6).
- No, my ears You have opened (*NIV*, “pierced”). Hebrews 10:5, following the LXX, gives a paraphrase in terms of meaning, “A body you have prepared for me.” God has taken His servant as His own, opening his ears to hear with a view to obeying the will of the Lord (v.8). The ears of God’s servant are open not closed, opened not plugged. Hearing God’s word means He belongs to the Lord in whole, not only in terms of religious ritual and ceremony. No Sunday only Christian here! Each day and every day I am the Lord’s, in body and soul, all of me, all of the time (Rom. 12:1-2). Calvin writes, “in gratitude, [David] offers and consecrates himself entirely to God; as if he had said, I am now wholly devoted to God, because, having been delivered by his wonderful power, I am doubly indebted to him for my life” (p. 98).

2) Know that what counts is internal

40:7-8

- Because the servant of the Lord is committed to the Lord, finds his satisfaction in the Lord, loves His Lord, he can say simply and clearly, “Behold, I come;” (*NIV*, “Here I am”). I am Yours!

- “In the scroll of the book it is written of me.” The Word of God, your Law, is my manual, my guide, the map of my life. David may have had in mind the royal charter for the conduct of a king found in Deut. 17:14-20, where the issues of the heart are paramount. These words also suggest the coming of one written about whose very coming itself is a fulfillment of O.T. promise and expectation. Thus Jesus can say in John 5:46, “Moses...he wrote of me.”
- The servant of the Lord has a 2-fold declaration, a motto for life!
  1. I delight to do your will, O my God.
  2. Your law is within my heart.

Here is the true New Covenant man of Jere. 31:31-34.

- All that matters in life is that he pleases God.
- He can know what pleases God because the Lord’s law is in His heart.
- Would to God that our passion for God would be the passion of Christ when He said in John 6:35, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me.”

IV. You must testify about the Lord with courage 40:9-10

John Piper: “Our joy in God is both our worship and evangelism. The theme of evangelism of v.3 finds a wonderful companion in vs. 9-10. Various aspects of the Lord’s salvation is trumpeted; our text being bracketed by the phrase “the great assembly.”

1) Tell of His righteousness 40:9-10

The salvation of the Lord is here described in a 5-fold manner: 1) Your righteousness, 2) Your faithfulness, 3) Your salvation, 4) Your loving-kindness, and 5) Your truth.

Here David says “Your righteousness,” i.e. your righteous acts (2X) I have proclaimed their good news: (positive aspect), “I do not restrain my lips” nor “have I hidden them in my heart” (negative aspect). God had put a new song in David’s heart (v.3) which he now heralds for all to hear, “How great is our God, sing with me how great is our God. And all will see how great, how great, is our God!” He saves and He delivers. He redeems and he rescues! Those who trust Him (vs. 3-4) will see His “wonderful works” (v.5), His righteousness.

2) Tell of His faithfulness 40:10

Four additional aspects of good news are now addressed, good news the great assembly of God’s people need to hear and never forget. David says “I declared them. I will not cancel them.

→ Faithfulness – dependability, support, firmness

→ Salvation – rescue, deliverance, safety, aid, help

→ Lovingkindness – (*hesed*), covenant love and loyalty

→ Truth – reliability, trustworthiness to keep your word

V. You must plead with the Lord will cause 40:11-15

There is now a change in tone. It is as if a new crisis, a new situation of distress and danger has arisen. Even with the Lord’s deliverance and direction, trouble is still lurking in the shadows where evil men often operate. David prayed in v.1 and was rescued. He will pray again and plead His cause in faith and confidence in the Lord.

Given that “innumerable evils” have overtaken him, he has no other hope than in the Lord. He has no where else to turn.

1) Ask for the Lord’s presence when ambushed 40:11-12

- David asks for 3 things in v. 11: 1) tender mercies (*rahamin*), 2) loving-kindness (*hesed*), and 3) truth (*emet*). He needs all 3 to preserve him (*NIV*, “protect”). Note the prominence of the personal pronoun “Your.” Personally, and as the leader and representative of God’s nation, they desperately need these. Why? Verse 12 has the answer.
- First, “innumerable evils (*NIV*, “troubles without number”) surround me.” Second, “my iniquities have overtaken me.” The result? “I am not able to look up.” I am paralyzed and shut down as I bear the load of these sins (Is the king taking on the sins of the nation as his own?! Van Gemeren, 323). Third, “They are more than the hairs of my head,” an intensifying of the previous 2 declarations. Fourth, “therefore my heart fails me.”
- David did not see all of this coming. So often we don’t. We see neither where the attacks are coming from nor what will be their intensity. David knew his troubles were great, but he also knew God’s tender mercies and truth were greater. Give me the Lord, for all else will fail me.
  - Tender mercies and loving-kindness will give us strength.
  - Truth is where we must stand, for here and here alone will we be preserved and protected.

2) Ask for the Lord’s protection when attacked 40:13-15



- The theme of the Lord's protections is more fully developed in vs 13-15.  
When we are attacked, ambushed, assaulted for doing the right thing in the right way as God's man or woman, we can ask the Lord to protect us, putting the whole matter in His hands, refusing to take it upon ourselves to render justice.
- One can sense the urgency of David's prayer as well as his willingness to give things to the Lord. Vs 13 Be pleased (it must be your will), O Lord (Yahweh), to deliver (rescue, save) me; O Lord, "come quickly" (*NIV*), to help me.
- Vs 14-15 David is specific in his prayer but note again, he in faith entrust the entire matter to the Lord. Note the repetition of the phrase "let them" (3X).  
First, let them be shamed and brought to confusion who seek my life (lit. "soul"). Foil their evil plans and show them their sin in what they do.  
Second, "let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor who wish me evil." This reinforces the first "let them."  
Third, "let them be confounded (*NIV*, "appalled") because of their shame, who say to me, "Aha, aha!" Aha is a potshot, a slur of derision and contempt; it expresses malicious joy and delight over the misfortune of one's enemy.
- David says make them ashamed, dishonored and shamed. David says confuse them, drive them backward, confound them. David says all they want is to take my life, do me evil, and ridicule me. Bottom-line David says, "I want

justice, what is right, but I will leave it all in your hands. In this strategy note:

God will get the glory, not us!

VI. You must rejoice in the Lord with celebration 40:16-17

There is a different “let them” (*NKJV*) or “May all” (*NIV*) group in these closing verses. Here are those, like David, who love, seek, rejoice in, and magnify the Lord. In beautiful balance they know who God is and who they are. One is mighty and magnificent. That is God. The other is poor and needy. That is us. So, keep 2 things in mind.

1) Remember He is your Savior 40:16-17

David prays that all who seek the Lord (a constant theme in the Psalms), will rejoice and be glad. Further, those who love the Lord’s salvation will respond in praise, “the Lord be magnified” (*NIV*, “exalted”). Salvation points us to the God who saves. To love His salvation is to love Him. That is why the text does not say, “Salvation be magnified.” No, “the Lord be magnified.” I do not love the rock up on which I stand. I love the Lord who put me there!

2) Remember He is your deliverer 40:17

- We have nothing to brag about or boast when God saves, when He delivers both today and forever. After all we are both poor and needy. We have nothing and need everything.
- Amazingly, the Lord thinks about us, little puny you and me. And He thinks about us with an intent to help and deliver. That is who He is. The Lord is my help. The Lord is my deliverer. Thus I can plead, when I am in trouble and people would do me harm, “do not delay, O my God.” Hurry! Come

soon! Come quickly! But, do it in your time not mine, according to your plan and purpose, not mine. You were right on time on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day with an empty tomb for your Son! I believe I can trust you too.

### Conclusion

What an amazing, but delightful surprise Ps 40 turns out to be. It portrays the career and commitment of Christ, and yet because we are in Him, there is a poignant and powerful word for us, a word of personal and world evangelization. When we are in the pits and cry out to our King like helpless and hopeless children, He hears and he answers. In response I join my confession and declaration with that of King Jesus in v. 8, "I delight to do your will, O my God." With a song in my heart and a resolve of will to serve Him anywhere, anyplace and anytime, people will see Him, fear Him and put their trust in Him as they see a life sold out to do God's will. Are you such a life? Will you say to King Jesus, "I delight to do your will, O my God?"