

Sunday 02-Jan-22

Waiting on the Lord

Psalm 40:1-17

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
- ² He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
- ³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.
- ⁴ Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.
- ⁵ Many, LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.
- ⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened—
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.
- ⁷ Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.
- ⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart."

⁹ I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;
I do not seal my lips, LORD,
as you know.

¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness
from the great assembly.

¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD;
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

¹² For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.

¹³ Be pleased to save me, LORD;
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

¹⁴ May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

¹⁵ May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
be appalled at their own shame.

¹⁶ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The LORD is great!"

¹⁷ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.

You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.

Matthew 26:36-46

Gethsemane

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Sermon: Waiting on the Lord

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Psalm 40** –we'll be focusing on the Psalm and we'll **briefly mention** our **NT reading** from **Matthew 26**.

Let me pray for God's guidance and understanding

Let's pray...

Intro/Context

- In **January** we're looking at a **series of Psalms** which **talk about Jesus, the Messiah** – they are known as **Messianic Psalms**
- This month we're going to look at **Psalm 40, Psalm 41, Psalm 45 and Psalm 68**
- Today we're **looking at Psalm 40** – and we see King David – the author of the Psalm is **waiting – waiting on the Lord!**

[PowerPoint 1-Heading]

- What things do we **wait for?**
- Waiting for **COVID to go away**
- Waiting for **COVID test results to come back**
- Waiting for **Centrelink or Telstra or Optus to answer our call?**
- Waiting for **a baby to arrive**
- Waiting for **Miss Right or Mr Right to come along**
- Waiting for God to answer your prayers and waiting for God to act
 - Maybe you have a **family member or friend not talking to you** and there's **no sign of reconciliation** – waiting waiting
 - Maybe you have been **struggling with a major trial in your life** – and there doesn't seem to be **any end in sight** – waiting waiting

- Maybe you have been **struggling with an illness** – and the **treatment is worse than the illness** – or the **treatment is just not working** – or **your recovery seems to be taking forever** - waiting waiting
- Maybe you are **grieving the pain of losing a loved one** – or **grieving losing your independence** – or **grieving losing the abilities you once had** and **you're getting older and less able than you were**
- Or maybe **we're all just waiting for Jesus to come back** – as it feels like the world, we live in, is just not the same - as it was **20-30 years ago?**
- It can seem like we just live our lives - waiting waiting waiting
- In this Psalm – **David reflects on what waiting on the Lord looks like**
- And we can learn from David's waiting

In his waiting...

First, David - looks backwards

[Looking Backwards \(Psalm 40:1-3\)](#)

[PowerPoint 1a-Back]

- As David looks back, he **realizes** he had to **wait patiently** – see v1
- In King David's life – he had **various times** when he **had to wait on the Lord** for a long time before things happened
 - **David** was **on the run from his enemies** several times and had to wait for the Lord to act and help him
 - Also - **David waited over 15 years to become King** – even though he had been anointed king
- **David** is not the only one in the Bible who had to **wait patiently**

- **Noah waited** a long time to build the ark before the flood came – and Noah **waited** a long time for the **flood rain to disperse**
- **Abraham waited 25 years** for the son God promised
- **Joseph waited a long time** [at least 15 years] to be reconciled to his brothers
- **The Israelites waited 40 years** in the wilderness - before occupying the Promised Land
- **Job waited along time** - through all his suffering
- So as David looks back – **he sees** that after waiting patiently
- **God reached out and pulled him out of the slimy muddy pit** – he was in - and stood him on solid ground – see v2
- Maybe we're here this morning and **feel like we're in a muddy pit** and we can see no way out of the mess we're in
- But David can tell us – when he looks back – that **by waiting patiently** – **God pulled him out**
- And the result of God acting – v3
- **David has a new song to sing** – a song of praise to God for helping Him
- To David, everything feels “new” - because God has helped him
- And David sees that **God is both to be feared** and to be trusted - at the end of v3
- For us: we must wait patiently too – and also look back as David did – and remember that God has helped us in the past – and so we can have confidence He will help us again in the future!

Looking Upwards (Psalm 40:4-5)

[PowerPoint 1b-upwards]

- Next David - looks upwards – vv4 & 5

- **He looks up to God** for his help – he doesn't look to those who are so proud that they think they can do without God
- And **David** doesn't trust in false gods – like some of his fellow Israelites do - which for us might be pinning our hopes on other people or on our wealth and possessions
- **David sees** that it is only God who has all the answers – and God is the one who has plans for each one of our lives
- And **David sees** that there is no one to compare to God
- For us: As we wait for the Lord – **are we looking up to Him for our source of help** – or are we looking around for others to help in all the wrong places – people who can't really help us – or people who will ultimately let us down – or people who may lead us astray – or who may be a bad influence on us
- For us: As we wait for the Lord – **are we foolishly thinking we can go it alone** – and not look up to God for His help and strength
- For us: Are we making God small and making ourselves and other people big – and underestimating what God can do?
- For us: If we think about it – if as David says – **the deeds and wonders that God can do are too numerous to count** – why would we be relying on anyone or anything else – but God?

[Looking Inwards \(Psalm 40:6-8 and Matthew 26:36-46\)](#)

[\[PowerPoint 1c-Inwards\]](#)

- So, David has looked back to see what God has done in the past and then looked up to the greatness of God
- **David now - looks inwards** – into his own heart to find the attitude which God will bless – that's in **verses 6 to 8**

- **David sees** that even though God was the one that introduced the animal sacrificial system for sins – these sacrifices were **only the outward sign** of what must be going on inside people’s hearts as they make sacrifices for their sins
- There must be a genuine desire for people to repent of their sin – and a genuine desire to obey God and to do God’s will – and to have God’s law and the obedience of His law - in their hearts
- So, David – **looks inwards** – as David does in another Psalm - Psalm 139:24 where he asks God – *to see if there be any offensive way in him and lead him in the way everlasting...*
- For us: as we wait on the Lord – are we examining our hearts and repenting of any disobedience?
- For us: as we wait on the Lord – are we seeking to do the Father’s will in all things – or are we tempted to go our own way?
- For us: are we tempted to “help” God rather than waiting – how did that work out for Abram and Sarai? Does God really want our help or does He want us to wait patiently and trust Him?
- As we turn to our **NT passage** this morning – from **Matthew 26**
- The **context** is our **Lord Jesus is also waiting**
- He’s **waiting** to be arrested – He’s **waiting** to be falsely accused – He’s **waiting** to be treated cruelly and suffer – He’s **waiting** to be found guilty even though He’s done nothing wrong – and He’s waiting to be crucified
- But what is Jesus doing?
- **He looks inwards** – see v38 – and says to His mates
- My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me

- And Jesus also looks upwards – He'd love to be spared from the agony and suffering that lies ahead
- But He says to His father – v39
- **My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.**
- **Jesus trusts and obeys God, the Father, in all things** – even unto death - and Jesus says - Not my will - but your will, Father – that's Jesus' attitude
- **That's the attitude David wants** here in Psalm 40
- And that's the attitude that Jesus wants for us
- Not our will but **God the Father's will**
- No matter what we are waiting for – no matter what we're going through
- **We must do the Father's will** – and **not go against His will** – and **not sin** – **to get out of the situation we're in** – it would be so easy for us to sin to fix the mess
 - Example – We're waiting for God to provide financially – so we steal or cheat on our tax return
 - Example – We're waiting for Miss Right or Mr Right – so we sleep around looking for love in all the wrong places
 - Example – We're waiting for God to bring an end to the trial we're going through – and He's too slow – so we give up praying, we give up reading the Bible, we give up church and we give up on our spiritual life – is that what God wants – or is that what Satan wants?

Looking Outwards (Psalm 40:9-11)

[PowerPoint 1d-Outwards]

- Having looked backwards, then looked upwards to God - and then looked inwards
- deep into his heart

- David has taken on board all that God has done and all that God requires of him
- And **now David looks outwards** – see vv9-11
- He declares what God has done for him publicly [David does that in his psalms all the time – doesn't he?]
- **David doesn't hide anything God has done for him – No! – David testifies about God's love and faithfulness to him**
- And David asks God to never withhold his mercy to him and that God's love and faithfulness will always protect him
- For us: are we sharing with other people - how we have waited for God in the past – and how He acted? Have we shared our testimony with others? Our testimony is one of the most encouraging things we can give – it shows others how God has worked in our lives – and how He can work in theirs

Looking Around and Upwards (Psalm 40:12-15)

- Despite all the positives so far
- David – like all of us – is aware that in this life on Earth
- **We will continue to face troubles**

[PowerPoint 1e-Around]

- So, in vv12-15 **David looks around**
- Whereas before it was God's wonders and deeds that were too many to count – now David is surrounded by troubles that are too many to count
- Isn't that a realistic picture of what our lives are like?
- We no sooner get over a difficult period – and then we look around – and there's more trouble coming at us

- I think we're all entering the New Year – with a level of fear and anxiety – with no end in sight for covid – with our plans of holidays or getting together with family and friends in jeopardy - or at the very least – uncertain
- It can feel like David says ***“troubles without number surround me”***
- And like David – we can feel like our hearts are failing within us
- But look where David's looking around – **ends up?**
- It ends up with him looking upwards to God - **again** –in vv13-15 – with a **series of arrow prayers**
 - V13 – David asks - ***Be pleased to save me, Lord – come quickly, Lord, to save me***
 - V14 – David asks that ***God deal with those who want to hurt him***
 - And v15 – David asks that ***those who heckle and ridicule and point the finger at him - saying “Aha! Aha!” – that they themselves will be shamed!***
- For us: David is saying – as we look around at the troubles that lie ahead – **we must be quick to look up again to our great God** – who can help us – just as He has done before – and wait patiently – and trust Him

Looking Forwards (Psalm 40:16-17)

- Despite the new troubles that loom ahead for David – **he finishes the Psalm on a confident note** in vv16-17

[PowerPoint 1f-Forward]

- David **looks forward** in v16
- And expresses the desire that **all who seek God will rejoice and be glad in knowing God is always there to help** and knowing that the Lord is Great!

- And so, He can conclude in v17 – that even though He is poor and needy – **He looks forward to his God** [personal] thinking of him –and - helping and delivering him in the future – and that God’s help will come his way without delay
- For us: We too can have the desire **for others to also know how great God is!**
- For us: We too can face the future – **confident that God is always thinking of us** – and will help us and will deliver us from our waiting – without delay.

Conclusion – Staying Connected to Jesus (Hebrews 10:1-18 & John 15:5)

- To finish up then – **I want to go back to the heart of Psalm 40** – to verses 6 to 8 – where David says – **God doesn’t want sacrifices and sin offerings** – as such – what God wants is for the person making those sacrifices – **to have a heart for God** – just like David was described as - a “man after God’s own heart” – and **God wants the person to have obedience and a desire to do God’s will**
- Ultimately though – **none of us can completely fulfill God’s desire for us to obey Him**
- We may have a heart for God – as David did – **but we can’t fully obey God and we sometimes don’t do God’s will** – but our own will
- So, the New Testament tells us in Hebrews 10 – and it quotes these verses 6 to 8 from Psalm 40 – **and it says that the whole idea of animal sacrifices for sin has been done away with** – because Jesus’ death on the cross has become the ultimate once and for all sacrifice for our sins to be forgiven
- So, when we tie Psalm 40 together with what Jesus does by His perfect sacrifice on the cross and His perfect obedience to God’s will
- We must admit that we CAN’T make ourselves right with God on our own – we can’t get ourselves in God’s good books by being good – because we can’t be

FULLY good – we must rely on Jesus’ obedience and Jesus’ sacrifice to be right with God

[PowerPoint 1g-Stay connected]

- **So, as we wait patiently for the Lord – we acknowledge that – Yes - God will lift us out of our slimy dirty muddy pits that we find ourselves in – in His own perfect timing – but we must also realize - *that we must hunger and thirst for righteousness* (Matthew 5:6) - (that is we must have a desire to become more like Jesus) – and we must remember that we must stay connected to Jesus, the vine – as Jesus says: *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing* (John 15:5)**
- **Once we remember to stay connected to Jesus – we can wait patiently for the Lord – and He will turn to us and He will hear our cry (Psalm 40:1) – in His good time!**

Let’s pray...

Father God, we acknowledge that there is no one as awesome as you and we can only marvel at what you have done for us in the past.

We admit that we’re not always good at waiting on you.

So please help us to be reminded of what you have done in the past – help us to look to you as our source of help – help us to examine our sinful hearts and repent – help us to share what you have done in our lives with others. Help us to face the future and wait patiently upon you – knowing that Jesus is the only one who is perfectly right with You – and because of His once and for all perfect sacrifice on the cross – we too are also right with you.

Help us to stay connected to Jesus and hunger and thirst to be like Him – confident that as we wait patiently on you – that you will hear our cries for help. In Jesus Name, Amen.