

THE KING BECOMES A PROPHET

Psalm 40:1-8

Part 1

Intro: In this series on the Psalms I was guided first by the Psalms which we focused upon in our Bible memory work this year which we began in January. Then I have sought the leading of the Lord in choosing other Psalms for us to consider together. I have not deliberately chosen the Psalms of David, neither have I tried to avoid them. But it is hard to stay away from them because King David, a singer and a musician wrote almost half of the 150 Psalms. Psalm 40 is a Psalm of David. And, like many (perhaps I could say most) of his Psalms, David was in trouble. Because he was such a godly man he had many enemies. Several men who have written on the Psalms believe that this was one of the Psalms which David wrote when he was experiencing the results of his son Absalom's rebellion against him. I can't think of anything worse than to have your son turn against you and actually want to kill you. But that is what David faced with Absalom. And he was not the only enemy that David had. If you and I are determined to live for the Lord, we are going to be a blessing to many, but with others we may bring out the worst in them. People by nature are at enmity with God, and so if we want to please God by doing His will so as to bring him glory, then God's enemies become our enemies.

So we find in this Psalm that David was in trouble, and he knew that there was no one but the Lord who could help him. Part of this Psalm is a prayer, and you can see how David prayed just by reading verses 11 through 15. In fact, let me read those verses to you right now. (Read Psa. 40:11-15.) I would say that David was desperate for help, wouldn't you?

But this morning I want to deal with the first eight verses which led up to that prayer. I have read this Psalm over and over more than I have most of the Psalms which David wrote in an attempt to see what David was doing in it, and I have not found it an easy Psalm to analyze. And in reading what others have written about it, I have found that others have faced the same difficulty.

One thing I am very thankful for is that the Spirit of God led the writer of the book of Hebrews to quote from this Psalm, and to apply his quotation to Christ. You will find that quotation in Hebrews, chapter 10 which we will look at in a moment. But let me just say at this point that the writer

of Hebrews links part of Psalm 40 to Christ. So one thing that we can positively say about Psalm 40 is that it is Messianic. In Psalm 40 David was speaking primarily to his fellow-Israelites about their coming Messiah Whom we know not was to be the Lord Jesus Christ. But I am getting ahead of myself, so let us begin at the beginning. We will look at eight verses, and then conclude the Psalm next Sunday, the Lord willing.

What was David doing in verse 1? I think that in verse 1 David was giving us:

I. The Conclusion at the Beginning (Psa. 40:1).

He wanted us to know that his relationship with the Lord did not keep troubles away, but that the Lord helped him, and blessed him, and taught him some wonderful lessons. The words here tell us that King David had sought help from the Lord (and he had done this many times). The Lord didn't answer him immediately, and so he had to wait. But the word "patiently" is a key word in this verse. He did not wait angrily, but patiently, and finally he saw that the Lord was inclined toward him, and heard his cry.

And then he related his waiting upon the Lord to how the Lord had already blessed him. And what the Lord had already done for him, made him realize that he could not wait on the Lord in vain (even though at some times it may seem that we are waiting in vain). We are in a hurry, but the Lord is not!

Well,

II. What had the Lord already done for him? (Psa. 40:2-5).

These words describe David's salvation. And those of us who know the Lord can say what David said. When you and I are waiting on the Lord in prayer, the Lord is reminding us that we were saved by faith, and since He saved us by faith, He has been teaching us that we need to learn to walk by faith. Salvation is not the record of what I have done for God, *but it is the record of what He has done for me – and what He has done for you!*

Verse 2 tells us that David was in a totally hopeless condition. He was in a pit of sin where he could not get out. But the Lord got him out, set his feet on a rock (which is one of the names of Christ), "and established my

goings. He made sure that I would not get back into that pit. He “established my goings.” I am weak; He is strong. But this is not all.

“He,” the Lord, “put a new song in my mouth.” What kind of a song was it? “Even praise unto our God” – because we all learn to sing the same song, a kind of a song that he couldn’t sing when he was in the pit. And the wonderful thing about this song is that other people hear it, and they “see” (or understand) “it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” “Fear” in this verse is a good word. It means to be stricken with awe and adoration for the God Who can do such a work.

So in verse 4 we have another conclusion. It is that the truly happy, or blessed person, is the one who makes the Lord his trust, and who breaks away from the old crowd. Actually the life of a Christian is so superior to anything that people have in the world that there really is no basis for comparison.

And then in verse 5 David spoke directly to God. You see salvation means that we can pray and expect to be heard. We have fellowship with the One Whom David addressed as, “O Lord my God.” When we have trusted the Lord, the Lord is “our God.” But then I learn that I can call him the “Lord my God.”

Here in verse 5 we see that David was rejoicing in all of God’s “wonderful works, but also in how God is constantly thinking about those of us who are His people. He is always thinking about us. He never forgets us. In fact, when our Lord was here on earth He said that the Lord “knows the things that we have need of before we ask Him (see Matt. 6:8).

But King David was not just thinking about our physical needs or our material needs, but He was thinking about our spiritual needs which are our greatest needs. David said that we couldn’t possibly list of them. We can’t even count them because there aren’t enough numbers in any language to count them all..

I can’t read this verse without thinking of how the Apostle Paul praised the Lord in his NT letter to the church at Ephesus. This is what he said in his prayer which is recorded in Ephesians 1:3:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Psalm 40:1-8 (4)

And then he went on to mention what some of them were. But we all need to read, and hopefully memorize, all of the blessings which Paul mentioned in that first chapter of Ephesians. He did not say that you need to ask for them, or to work or pray for them. He said that if you are in Christ, you already have them. Learn what they are, and then thank the Lord for them.

Now in verses 2 through 5 here in Psalm 40 David was speaking of what the Bible calls *salvation*. *Salvation is the main subject of the Bible*. King David has described it in these verses we have just covered. We are all born without it. But we all need it. Can we buy it? No, it is not for sale. Can we work for it? No, again. The Bible tells us that it is not of works. And this is where a lot of OT Jews were making a big mistake. They felt that if they kept the Law of Moses, they would be saved. But that is not what David indicated in Psalm 4. He described salvation with these words: “He [the Lord] brought me up also out of an horrible pit . . . and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psa. 40:2).

Now to find the answer as to how I can be saved, let us go on to verses 6, 7, and 8 to find our answer. (Read Psa. 40:6-8.)

Now let me ask you a question: Who is the speaker? The words in this Psalm so far have been David’s words. Are they still David’s words as we move on to verse 6 and 7 and 8? If so, then we would have to say that salvation is by works, by doing the will of God. Now this is where the verses in Hebrews, chapter 10, help us. Please turn to that passage where the writer of Hebrews was quoting from Psalm 40. I will begin reading from verse 1 so we can get the whole point of our text in Psalm 40.

(Read Hebrews 10 beginning with verse 1.) Let me stop with verse 4.

We know that the Law was given by God to the people of Israel through Moses. And it was under the Law that the people were required to offer those sacrifices. They had the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. There was a burnt offering that was offered every morning, and another burnt offering was offered every evening. The people were busy all of the time offering sacrifices to God. They had a high priest, and many regular priests. But the writer of Hebrews 10:4 said that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” But the people were inclined to believe that by offering animal sacrifices their sins were forgiven.

What, then, was the purpose of the animal sacrifices because obviously under the Law of Moses they were very important. The people faced physical death if they did not offer the sacrifices.

Well, there are basically two reasons for the animal sacrifices. In Romans 3 we read these words in verses 19 and 20:

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The purpose of the Law of which the sacrifices were a major part, was to show the people that they were sinners.

But a second reason for the Law is given to us in the book of Galatians, but it is obvious from the OT as well.

The original statement concerning salvation is given to us in Genesis 15:6 where we read that “Abraham believed God, and He [God] counted it to him for righteousness.” Abraham was saved, was declared righteous before God by faith, by faith in a salvation that was dependent upon God alone. Now the Apostle Paul argues from that that God cannot come along four hundred and thirty years later and say, “No, salvation is not by faith, but it is by obedience to the Law.” God in so doing would nullify his promise to Abraham, and the result would be that there would be no salvation at all. Salvation cannot be by faith, and then changed to be by works.

Now going to Galatians 3 we read these words to show the second purpose of the Law. Here it is in Galatians 3:19-26:

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Psalm 40:1-8 (6)

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Now if you still have your Bible open at Hebrews 10, let me continue reading with verse 5. (Read Hebrews 10:5-10.)

And so now I ask the question , Whose was speaking in Psalm 40:6-8? Those are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. King David knew that the Messiah, Christ, was coming to do the will of God, the Father, offering His own blood for the salvation of all who would put their trust in Him.

Concl: I close by reminding you of words spoken by our Lord concerning the will of the Father. We read this words in John 6:37-40:

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

What was the Father's will? See Matthew 26:39:

O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Psalm 40:6-8 are the words of the Lord Jesus. Knowing that no one could be saved by the works of the Law, but knowing also the terrible, indescribable sufferings that awaited Him at the Cross, yet because of His love for His Father, and His love for you and me, He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy Law is within my heart."

Salvation is not by works, but by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who by the shedding of His blood on the Cross, secured the salvation of all who by the grace of God, put their trust in Him.