

# Psalm 40 • I delight to do your will, O my God

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Psalm chapter 40, let's begin there. Psalm chapter 40 is divided up into 2 sections. But before we start, let's go ahead and pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You so much for giving us this time tonight to be in Your Word. And we pray tonight that Your Word would open our hearts and really speak to us tonight.

You know where Your people are in their walk with You. You know what they need. You know what is the greatest need in fact, and we pray that tonight's time spent in the Word would fill our spiritual tank and help us, Lord, to leave this place this evening built up, encouraged, and walking in faith.

Be with us, we pray, Lord, and speak to our hearts, in Jesus name, amen.

As I said, Psalm chapter 40 is divided up into 2 sections. The first section is from verse 1, down to verse 10, and it basically contains David's expression of praise for the Lord's past deliverance in response to his petition, earlier petition and prayer.

And then beginning in verse 11, on to the end, David is going to use that past deliverance to springboard into crying out to God regarding his current need for the Lord's help.

And I got to thinking about that. I got to thinking what would happen if we adopted that sort of a pattern for prayer? What if we didn't pray until we had given thanks? That's what I'm saying. What if we didn't start asking for things? That's the best way to put it, until we had already spent time thanking Him for past answers to prayer. You know what I mean?

Do you think about past answers to prayer? I would encourage you, write them down in your Bible, write them down on a piece of paper, put them somewhere where you can see them. And when you are going to the Lord in prayer and beginning to lay up petitions before Him, take out that list, or turn to that blank page in your Bible. You know they have those blank parts in the front or

whatever. And read some of those, and talk to the Lord, and thank Him for those answers to prayer before you move into your time of petition.

I think it really changes the way we go about praying when we spent time thanking Him for past answers because it builds up a sense of expectation that the Lord's going to answer my prayer. The Lord saw me through this previous situation that I was in, right? And I believe that He can see me through this time as well.

Anyway, let's read the first 10 verses here. This is where David praises God for His faithfulness, for His deliverance. He says here,

*“I waited patiently for the LORD;  
he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction,  
out of the miry bog, (boy, illustrated language, huh?)  
and set my feet upon a rock,  
making my steps secure.  
3 He put a new song in my mouth,  
a song of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear,  
and put their trust in the LORD.  
  
4 Blessed is the man who makes  
the LORD his trust,  
who does not turn to the proud,  
to those who go astray after a lie!  
5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God,  
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;  
none can compare with you!  
I will proclaim and tell of them,  
yet they are more than can be told.” (ESV)*

Now, as we get into these next couple verses, pay special attention here, would you? Beginning here in verse 6. David says,

*“In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,  
but you have given me an open ear.  
Burnt offering and sin offering  
you have not required.  
7 Then I said, “Behold, I have come;  
in the scroll of the book it is written of me:*

<sup>8</sup> *I delight to do your will, O my God;  
your law is within my heart.*””

I want to focus on those 3 verses, if I could, just for a moment here, because when you first start reading verse 6, you might be a little bit confused, because what is David saying here?

He says in verse 6, *“In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,...”* And then he goes on to say, *“Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.”*

Now, that's interesting because David is writing during the Old Testament, when burnt offerings and sin offerings were required. They were required by the law. You can read it right in the..., well, we've gone through those studies, where we've talked about all those, where those Old Testament sacrifices were demanded of the Jews to go through and do that sort of thing.

What is David saying when he says, You don't delight in these things, nor have you required these sorts of things? Because they can sound conflicting.

Well, David isn't minimizing the biblical commands to do those kinds of offerings and bring them to the Lord, instead he's emphasizing the right heart attitude related to those things. And basically when he says here, if you notice in verse? Well, it's, I guess it's buried in the middle of verse 6.

He says, *“In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,* (and then he makes the statement) *but you have given me an open ear.”* In other words, you've opened my understanding to the reality of what You really want related to these things. What David understood is what God is looking for when it comes to sacrifices, is an attitude of the heart that cares about the reason the sacrifices are being given.

You got to know, you guys, that even though Israel was commanded to bring sacrifices in the Old Testament, they got into habits, ruts, maybe is a better word for it, where it just became very every day. And you know what they slipped into? They slipped into meaningless, ceremonial religion. I don't know if you can relate. I don't know if you've ever been in meaningless, ceremonial religion.

But there are people who do it all the time. They go to church, they say the things, they might make a few gestures, they might even do communion. They go through, they listen, they sing a song, they do that and that, and then they

leave. And it doesn't make any difference. It hasn't changed their life. It's religion. It's empty religion.

And that's what the Jews would often get involved in and David is referring to that empty religious practice where people just thought, I can live the way I want to live but I'm I'll bring my sacrifice when the next festival or feast comes up. I'll bring the required sacrifice and we'll go through the motions and surely God is going to be delighted with me because I've done my part. And David says God is not delighted with those sacrifices because what He wants more than anything else, is a heart of obedience.

You guys remember the Book of 1 Samuel, Samuel told king Saul to wait a period of time until he could come and give a sacrifice before they went to war. But the men started getting scared and started running off. And so Samuel eventually confronted Saul by saying,

#### **1 Samuel 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 listen than the fat of rams.”*

*“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, (he said) to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”*

This is one of those wonderful passages that joins with what David is saying here related to sacrifices, where he says, it's the heart. God doesn't want you and I involved in empty religious ceremonies and practices, He wants us to care. You know, there's also, let me put another passage from Isaiah, also up on the screen, where God confronted the people with their empty religious stuff. He said,

#### **Isaiah 1:11, 14-15 (ESV)**

*“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.”*

*“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; (He says) they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; (here's why, the whole thing) your hands are full of blood.”*

Your hands are full of blood. And He's talking about the fact that they're living their lives the way they want to live them, and yet they're going through all of the ceremonial religious motions. And God says knock it off, I don't care.

He put together the sacrificial system in the Old Testament so that people would be moved to repent of their sin. So that they would see and understand the idea of a blood sacrifice; a sacrifice where one life is given for another. And that they would walk in an attitude of gratitude and joy that God is a forgiving God, but they lost sight of all that, and they just went through the religious practices. These are some very important verses about staying clear of that.

And then in verses 7 and 8, look with me in your Bible. These have a special meaning. Again, we're going to read these, he says, *“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: <sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’”*

This is an interesting statement for David to make but you have to know that when every king of Israel took his place on the throne, he was given a personal scroll of the Torah that he was to keep with him, and obviously to read often.

And David is expressing here in these verses, his desire to do the will of the Lord and to do it with a willing heart. But here's the interesting thing. These verses take on an even greater significance because they're quoted by Jesus Christ. And it is, interestingly enough spoken of, I guess it's not quoted by Him, spoken of Him is the better way to say that. Hebrews 10, let me put it on the screen for you so you can see it together. The writer of Hebrews says,

#### **Hebrews 10:5-7 (ESV)**

*Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”*

*Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"*

And so the writer of Hebrews makes this a personal quotation, if you will, of Jesus declaring that statement in the Psalms is actually fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. *"...it is written of me in the scroll of the book."* And that's one of the ways we know that the Old Testament is all about Jesus. It is written about Him throughout the whole thing.

Makes me wonder, when I read a passage like the one we put up there from Hebrews, it makes me wonder how many other statements David made in the Psalms that were fulfilled that we're not even aware of. John told, tells us at the end of his Gospel account that, not everything that Jesus said is written down. He said if all those things could be written down, he said, I don't even know if all the books in the world could contain all of that information. Well, that's a lot of talking, we probably have a lot of storage these days.

But the point is, the Bible doesn't cover everything that Jesus ever said and that Jesus ever did, even. And so I have to wonder, how many more things that we're going to find out one day that David wrote in the Psalms, actually were fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry.

David ends this first section of this Psalm in verse 9 by saying,

*"I have told the glad news of deliverance  
in the great congregation;  
behold, I have not restrained my lips,  
as you know, O LORD.  
<sup>10</sup> I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;  
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;  
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness  
from the great congregation."*

David is speaking here to the Lord and he's telling Him that he's been faithful to speak of the goodness of God to others. And he's basically saying, you've done amazing things in my life, and I just want you to know I haven't held back. I haven't withheld this sort of, this revelation, this insight from other people. I've told people what You've done for me.

And makes me think about, when you and I think about what Jesus did for us on the cross, and we begin to really realize, I guess, the weight, the sheer weight of what was accomplished for us on the cross at Calvary, it's like, how can you keep that hidden? How can you not talk about that?

Have you noticed that we're real quick to talk about other things? That we, that are good, happy. Boy, when we find a bargain at the store, we're quick to tell people. You're not going to believe what I found. Went to the store, they had this leftover Black Friday thing, it was sitting right there out in the open, still priced the same, didn't even have to get up at 4:30, and I got, nabbed that thing, and man, that was great, or something like that. Or when you when somebody finds a doctor that they really like, they'll tell people. They'll tell folks, hey, I went to the doctor, this new guy, he's really great.

I wonder sometimes, because you see, those things don't even begin to equal what the Lord has done for you and I on the cross. I have to wonder, why aren't we telling people? Why aren't we sharing the good news?

Why aren't we telling people, you're not going to believe what God did for me. You're not going to believe it. He sent His Son to die on the cross for me. Have we lost that excitement? Have we lost that joy?

David says, I have not held back. I have not taken what You've done for me and just bound it up in my heart. I've shared it. I've told people. Don't be timid. Right? It's good news.

By the way, we have to remind ourselves of that. It's called, the good news. You know why they call it that? Yeah. It's good, because it's good news. That's pretty deep, isn't it?

Okay, the last 7 verses of the chapter, you'll notice as we get into these, are going to change the tone of this Psalm pretty drastically because although David has spent time recalling the goodness of the Lord in the previous 10 verses, he's now going to move on to what he needs to lay before the Lord as it relates to his current need. And it's pretty dire.

Look at verse 11 and following. He says,

*“As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain  
your mercy from me;  
your steadfast love and your faithfulness will  
ever preserve me!”*

*<sup>12</sup> For evils have encompassed me  
beyond number;  
my iniquities have overtaken me,  
and I cannot see;  
they are more than the hairs of my head;  
my heart fails me.*

*<sup>13</sup> Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me!  
O LORD, make haste to help me!*

*<sup>14</sup> Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether  
who seek to snatch away my life;  
let those be turned back and brought to dishonor  
who delight in my hurt!*

*<sup>15</sup> Let those be appalled because of their shame  
who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"*" And that's an expression that was used at that time to say, now we've got him, we've got him right where we want him.

David says,

*"<sup>16</sup> But may all who seek you  
rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who love your salvation  
say continually, "Great is the LORD!"*

*<sup>17</sup> As for me, I am poor and needy,  
but the Lord takes thought for me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
do not delay, O my God!*

I love how this Psalm, although David, he lays it before the Lord about his need. I love how it ends with faith here with him saying, the Lord takes thought for me. Because, David admits right here, even though he uses a word that you and I don't necessarily, I don't know how often you tell the Lord that, your iniquities have overtaken you.

I don't use that kind of language, but iniquity is just another word for sin, basically. And to say my sin has overtaken me is to say, I'm drowning in my sin. I'm drowning in the byproduct or the consequences of my actions. They've finally just overwhelmed me. Here's a man who is confessing to God that his sins have just blown up in his face. And yet, what does he say at the end of this prayer? He says, I know, Lord God, that You take thought of me.



I've mentioned so many times in our study of the Psalms that David's attitude toward God is so different from so many of ours. When we've sinned, I will say that I, a good number of the people who come at least and talk to me about their confession of sin, usually conclude that God no longer wants to listen to them because of their sin. Or that God has turned away and they're praying to their ceiling instead of to the Lord of heaven and that He's just closed off toward them.

And the reason we do that, you guys, is because we don't see what David saw. And what David saw was the character of God. He knew the mercy of God so intimately, that he knew even when he sinned, when his sins had overwhelmed him, that God's mercy was greater still. Right? God's grace overflowed, even in those situation where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. (Romans 5:20)

That's what the Word tells you and I, but yet we don't believe it. We choose not to believe it. Whether it's because the enemy has whispered in our ear, or our own guilt has taken hold of us to such a degree that I'm just not connecting anymore with the reality of what God's Word is saying. But we just shut down and we go into this mode of just self-discouragement and whatever all else and we're just like, I give up. I give up. God hates me. God never will listen to another word that I ever say as long as I live.

People, that is a lie from the pit of hell and what David is saying here is what you and I need to learn to say. the Lord takes thought for me. "*... the Lord takes thought for me.*" The Lord thinks of me. The Lord is mindful of me.

The Lord listens to me, even when I'm a dope, even when I do stupid things, even when I mess up royally, even when I transgress His law, even when I thumb my nose at His goodness and mercy. When I turn to Him, He listens to me. When I cry out to Him and say, God, forgive me. I confess my sin. He hears me. He responds to me.

**1 John 1:9 (NIV)**

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

We can't let go of that, you guys, or the enemy wins. And he'll, I'm telling you, he'll beat you to smithereens. I love how this Psalm ends and which is why David is able to finish out the Psalm by saying, "*...may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;...*" To that we say, amen.